

北山結莉

Yuri Kitayama

Illustrator ◆ Riv

5

✽ 白銀の花嫁

精靈

【せいれいげんそうき】

幻想記

HJ文庫

Seirei Gensouki

Arc 5: In The Destination of The Future  
Which He Imagined

by Kitayama Yuri

[Novel Updates](#)

Translator: [Roxism HQ](#)

Epub: [TrolloWN/LN EPUB](#)

# Vol.5 LN Illustrations (Possible Spoilers)



リオは両脇から  
アイシアとドリユアスに  
腕をホルドされた状態で、  
どこか居心地が悪そうに  
苦笑いをたたえている。

普段通りばーつとしているアイシアの表情と、  
愉快そうに微笑むドリユアスの表情が  
実に印象的だった。









「えへへ、そっか。  
じゃあ私と  
一緒だね」

「……うん、一緒」

ラティーファが嬉しそうに頷く。  
美春も今度は嬉しそうに微笑んだ。  
そうすることで、切ない胸のざわつきも  
少しだけ収まったような気がした。

精霊の里



**サラ**  
銀狼獣人の少女



**オーフィア**  
ハイエルフの少女



**アルマ**  
エルダードワーフの少女



**アルスラン**  
獅子獣人の少年



**ベラ**  
銀狼獣人の少女でサラの妹



**ドリュアス**  
精霊の里に住む準高位精霊

ベルトラム王国



**セリア＝クレール**  
リオの学院時代の恩師である伯爵令嬢  
望まぬ政略結婚を間近に控えている



**ラティーファ**  
狐獣人の元奴隷少女で異世界転生者  
リオをお兄ちゃんと呼び慕っている

ガルアーク王国



**リーゼロッテ＝クレティア**  
公爵令嬢でリッカ商会の会頭



**クリスティーナ＝ベルトラム**  
ベルトラム王国の  
第一王女



**フローラ＝ベルトラム**  
ベルトラム王国の  
第二王女































# Chapter 85 – For The Sake Oof Meeting With Hero

## Part 1

"You want to meet with the hero..... Of our kingdom"

The comfortable soprano voice of Liselotte resounded inside the tranquil parlor room.

"Yes. That's right"

Rio's affirming with a voice that's pleasant to hear.

"..... My apologies for being impolite but, may i know why you want to meet the hero"

Liselotte asked that question after a short pause.

Empress of One Hundred-Million(Sumeragi Satsuki)— the hero who appeared recently in the Galwark kingdom, she was the VIP of this kingdom.

Even if an ordinary person of unknown origin said that he wanted to meet her, she's naturally not someone who you can meet so easily.

*Does the person in front of me have some sort of business with her?*, Liselotte squinted her eyes as she's trying to grasp his true intention.

"It's because there's something I want to tell her when we meet"

Rio's answering as he's staring directly into Liselotte's eyes.

"May you allow me to hear about that something"

From his voice, gesture, and expression, he's not lying.

After judging that, Liselotte asked Rio.

But, Rio's shaking his head.

"Sorry but, I cannot say the detailed account of that something. Well, half of the reason is something similar to a pleasure trip out of curiosity"

So he replied.

Liselotte squinted her eyes as she remained silent for a while.

"..... By my conclusion, could it possibly be introducing Haruto-sama to hero-sama"

When her eyes open again, after wearing an extremely serious expression, she said that solemnly.

But, it's followed by a troubling expression and,

"But, My deepest apologize for this, from my standing, I'm unable to let someone of unknown origin to meet hero-sama"

Liselotte add those words.

The current her almost knows nothing about Rio.

She just somehow knows his outer nature. She heard that he was born in the neighbouring country.

But, what kind of life Rio experienced, which country and organization he belongs to, what kind of road he walked in the past, is he don't have problem in relation to the person of the back——.

Liselotte didn't know anything about this kind of information regarding to Rio's personal history.

Their relationship is just too shallow for her to know that kind of thing.

From his speech and manner, she can't think that someone so cultured is a commoner, from his battle against the ghoul, she knows that there's a knight in that place who is boasted to be powerful enough to escape barefooted. [TL : not too clear about this line—マナーや言葉遣いなどからリオは平民とは思えぬ教養を身につけていることが窺えるし、グールとの戦闘からそこいらの騎士が裸足で逃げ出すほどの強さを誇ることもわかっている。]

This kind of skill by no means exist in a mere random commoner.

That's why, despite questioning whether Rio's a highborn[noble], it can't be helped to leave it as just an estimation since Rio has too many mysteries.

Of course, as a person, Liselotte has this feeling that she can trust Rio.



But, she can't trust him so easily as a noble of Galwark kingdom.

For example, if something happens to Satsuki when she lets them meet, the question will lie in the credibility of Liselotte since her action brought harm to the national interest.

## Part 2

Rio said that he has something to tell to Satsuki.

If she thinks normally, it's quite difficult for there to be something like Satsuki appearing from another world, just what kind of talk does Rio want to tell Satsuki.

If he has some other intention other than just to talk to Satsuki——

Galwark kingdom have announced the existence of the hero just the other day but, that existence was an open secret up till that point.

That's why even if you meet someone of another country, as long as that person have a bit of good ears, there's a situation that will make it not very hard to know that there's a hero in Galwark kingdom.

For example, if Rio belongs to another country and he's planning for the assassination of Satsuki, or if the assassination is not his intention but just to spy on her, she cannot afford to bring Rio to meet Satsuki.

Liselotte is already considering till that far in just a moment.

"I think that's just natural"[Rio]

Rio's replying with the same words as her.

"Still, even I don't wish to harm the hero of Galwark kingdom. If you're so insisted with it, I don't even mind to have a chat with her by being restricted in a jail" [Rio again]

Looking straight into Liselotte's eyes and then, Rio added another words.

It seems this statement is because he's seeing through on what I'm worrying about. In short, this is a indirect appeal of him being upright.....

As she thinks that way, Liselotte was catching Rio's line of sight from the front.

After she's staring back at him like that, she catches a glimpse of his wry smile.

A while later, she's letting out a short sigh and,

"I have no choice but to trust you if you're going as far as that right. Understood. Though to make the two of you meet in private is a little difficult, I'll introduce the two of you"

Thus Liselotte told him that.

Assuming that Rio is a spy, he can't and haven't even means to the so called gaining her trust by deliberately attracting her attention by coming out from his concealment.

But, even if he's moving that far, the danger of him being a spy or assassin might be low.

By weighing on the scale about the matter of her gratitude for the other day and those little danger, Liselotte decided to put her trust on Rio.

"Are you really okay with that"

Rio asking with the expression as if her decision is a little unexpected.

"Yes. The debut party of the hero-sama will be held soon in the capital of Galwark kingdom. Though I expect that many domestic and certainly another country's nobles will be invited, I can use my authority to invite a foreign guest to that place. Though it's not a private meeting, how do you think about that "

"That's the best thing I could ask for. My deepest gratitude for your proposal"

Rio bowed his head respectfully to Liselotte's offer.

"I'll comply with it then. Well then, should we do with this kind of arrangement. It's scheduled just one month later, though it's been decided that you'll be accompanying me, do you have any questions "



## Part 3

Rio showing a little hesitation to the question that's coming from Liselotte and then,

"Certainly. Well then, there's something that I wish to confirm. As we're moving till arriving in the capital, will I be accompanied by Liselotte-sama "

Having thrown that question to Liselotte.

"That's right. Should I not arrange it that way if it's not convenient for you "

"Certainly. Please help me in that regard"

After that, they make a confirmation regarding several matters and then, the talk moved to the topic in relation to the supply of the liquor.

"Twice in one year. With that said, I'll carry only the decided amount needed toward Liselotte-sama's place, how about it Going by what we decided the other day, the contract renewal within the timeframe of one year, in the case we're renewing the contract, it'll be applied by both involved parties six months before the term. As from me, I won't supply the liquor to other people of the same profession"

Since there's already a perfected model of the contract, he's presenting the condition including the confirmation of the meaning.

"Yes. Since there's also the season for manufacturing the liquor, that condition is just excellent. Do you really have no need for our help regarding the transportation "

Price is price therefore, though the thing in request becomes quite small amount of liquor, he might need a coach for transportation.

Regarding the coach, seeing the cost in relation to must have for the maintenance of the horse or maintaining the coach, unless they're a merchant, the number of people who have a private coach is quite small in number.

Therefore, though Liselotte is offering to provide the coach including the cabman in regard of the transportation, Rio refused her offer.

"Yes. There's no problem about it. Though seeing that this contract has entered the stage completion, you might want to clarify my means of transportation right. Though, if possible I don't want to speak about it with exception of Liselotte-sama by this point of time....."

When he tells her that, Rio sent a fleeting glance to Natalie and Aria who's keeping their silence inside the room.

Even if he keeps the rule of secrecy, it'll buy a distrust if he goes too far.

To gain the trust from Liselotte, there might be a need to release as much information as possible to the extent that it won't hinder him.

But, since the item box in Rio's possession might draw out unnecessary intention from undesirable fellows if it's known to the public, in case he's telling someone about it, it's desirable to someone he decided to put his trust.

For that reason, the one he's going to tell about it in this occasion must be limited to Liselotte.

"..... I see. Aria, Natalie, please leave the room for a moment"

Liselotte said that as she's showing the gesture of thinking about something with her hand on her chin.

It's an extremely risky action for holding a meeting just by the two of them behind the closed door without even leaving any guards.

Therefore, though Aria and Natalie was slightly surprised,

"Certainly. We'll be standing by in front of the room"

Telling so, they're bowing their head and then left to the other side of the door.

"My deepest gratitude for hearing my request"

## Part 4

Rio's bowing lightly as he tells her his gratitude.

"That's reasonable. But, will I hear the reason for you to hide the means of transportation immediately "

"Certainly. I'm owning the possession of an artifact called the warehouse of time and space [Item Box]. If I must explain it in brief words, it's a temporal baggage, an item which can put or stow away something in the subspace which is like an isolated space"

Staring intently into Liselotte's eyes as he said that.

"A subspace which you can use to store..... Your luggage Judging from the story just now, the luggage, is it possible to store it away without letting it rot "

"Yeah, exactly"

Even Liselotte's clearly surprised by that information.

If it's really true, if it's coming from merchant, it was an item that she'll die to get her hand on it.

She only heard that's a counterfeit tool but, there's no need to Rio to tell a lie in this kind of situation.

"Will you let me to personally see it"

"Naturally. Well then, in this kind of situation, let's just take out the stowed item in this place. 'Release(Discharge)'"

After Rio recited the aria to invoke the item box, a mini vortex is formed on top of the office desk, a plate with chocolate cut into bite size appeared on top of it.

Liselotte's seeing that situation intently without being able to hide her astonishment.

"I-it seems like it's the real one right"

"Yeah, if you don't mind please enjoy this. It's a homemade namachoco\*.



Though I don't know whether it's suitable to your palate"[TL\* : Mixture of chocolate, cream and liquor, blablabla]

Rio ate the cooled and chilled namachoco with a fork which came with the plate and presented the plate to Liselotte.

"Well then, I should try one right. ....T-This is "

After nervously stuffing the namachoco into her mouth, Liselotte eyes opened wide in surprise.

"..... It's a highly aromatic chocolate right. The fragrance filling my entire mouth"

Liselotte's telling her honest impression while showing her natural smile.

"It's my pleasure that it's suitable for your palate"

The recipe of confection was something that he received the teaching from the high elf girl, Oufia in seirei no tami village.

he received an extremely high review from Aki and Celia when he made it together with Miharuru a while ago, the one he had taken out now was the one that was preserved from that time.

"I'll recite 'Charge(Storage)' when I want to keep it away"

After saying that, a vortex appeared as if swallowing the plate and the plate suddenly disappeared.

"AH....."

# Part 5

Liselotte’s letting out a dissapointed voice when she saw the chocolate vanish.

Rio unintentionally let out a laugh in seeing her like that.

""Release(Discharge)""

Rio reciting the aria again and then, the chocolate on the plate appeared again on top of the desk.

"Please enjoy it by all means"

Rio presented the chocolate again to Liselotte.

"T-Thank you very much"

Liselotte’s saying her gratitude while blushing to her ears.

Though she skillfully hid it, her eyes shone with happiness.

Rio’s picking up the chocolate in order to easily eat mentally and, Liselotte also starting to stretching her hand.

"The slightly lingering sweetness is just so unbearable"

Liselotte’s loosening her lovely face as she’s enjoying the flavour of the chocolate in her mouth.

Rio was smiling kindly to her reaction.



"I know the whereabouts of Satsuki-san"

After finishing his meeting with Liselotte and going back to his house, Rio told the confirmed location of Satsuki to Miharuru and co.

The four of Masato, Aki, Miharuru and, Rio is sitting on the sofa of the living room.

"Is that true"

Miharuru and co’s face suddenly turned bright with a “Pa”.

"Yes. Should I say as expected, it seems she become the hero. She's residing in the royal castle of Galwark kingdom"

And, Rio told them what kind of place Satsuki currently at.

"A hero huh..... It sounds nice"

Masato's muttering silently with a atmosphere for yearning to be the so called hero.

Maybe because he's still in that age, he's having an unconditional yearning for this kind of existence.

Though, As for Rio, he's not one bit being envious imagining standing on her position, he couldn't help but unintentionally feel that it's an extremely troublesome position.

"You're just a brat right"

Aki's sighing as if quite grieving about it.

"Why can't I. I mean, nee-chan is also still a kid right"



## Part 6

Masato refuted while pouting at her.

Seeing the two of them acting normally, their face is as bright as usual.

From the fact that One month here since the demons is raided this place, they're absorbed with learning pole arts, swordsmanship and the language by secluding themselves in this place, it seems they finally became able to feel relieved to the unexpected good news.

Miharu was also looking delightfully at the two of them.

"Please wait a minute"

Just like that when the customary frolicking between the two of them about to happen, Rio interpose their words.

"Ah, yes. I'm sorry"

"Sorry"

Aki and Masato's apologizing as if embarrassed by their actions.

Rio tells them that it's not a problem by slightly shaking his head and,

"Seeing that we already know her whereabouts, I want everyone to meet Satsuki as fast as possible but..... We couldn't meet her easily when we're looking at her standing. Do you understand by this point "

"N? ㇏ Isn't it okay if we just meet her by normal means It should be okay if we just explain our situation to the gatekeeper right "

Masato's asking that while tilting his head.

"..... I wonder, will it be that simple"

Thereupon, Miharu muttered that problem.

"Though I won't say that it's impossible, or rather I think that the gambling-like factor is just too strong. The risk is also high"

So Rio pointing his disapproval.

Say nothing for Miharu and co, even for Rio who has been living for a long time in this world, his standing is no different from that of a commoner in Galwark kingdom.

When this kind of people saying that they want to meet Satsuki, the simple audience with Satsuki who's staying in the royal capital as guest estate might never come true.

the possibility of the side where they're being shooed by the gatekeeper of the castle when explaining their situation is high.

"Risk"

Masato asked at him.

"It's something like everyone with quite abundant magical power is being used and protected as the state mage. If you think of the worst case, all of you will be taken as a hostage as insurance to make Satsuki-san to obey the king's orders"

"....."

Miharu and co showed a stiff face to the sharpness of Rio's explanation.

The magical power of Miharu and co is unmatched by the human tribe who live in this world, their utility value is extremely high even just by training them as a mage.

Even based on the point of their relationship with Satsuki who's a hero, though they might not be forced to the dangerous place where they'll die easily, some people might try to use Miharu and co in the power struggle amongst the royalty and nobility.

When thinking about that, even if they can meet normally, he cannot afford to take Miharu and co to suddenly go to Satsuki's place.

"No matter how you look at it, we..... Cannot afford to do this kind of action right"

## Part 7

Aki asked with a timid voice.

"I wonder about that. It's because there's nothing like thing that recognizes the human right in this world. It doesn't even have a system to keep the people of authority in check for the sake of masses. That's why as long as you have power, you can do anything you like to the weak. The gathering place of influential people is narrow and a hard place to live in"

Smiling as if troubled by her, Rio's replying to her in a way as if admonishing her.

Aki gulped as the matter told to her is not a joking matter is transmitted.

"Well, the talk after this is the problem"

Rio cut short the story after looking at Aki and co.

"The truth is, it seems there'll be a debut party of the hero in the royal castle of Galwark kingdom one month later. It has been arranged for me to receive the invitation for this party but....."

After arriving till that point, Rio's taking a short stop as he's taking a short breath.

"I'll come and approach to have a chat when I meet Satsuki-san in that place. And then, I'll think of a way to make everyone to be able to meet Satsuki-san if possible but, I wonder if everyone is okay with house sitting "

As expected, doing something like inviting a group of unknown commoners to the debut party of Satsuki is not possible even with someone of Liselotte's lineage, the only one who can attend the party is just Rio.

Though they have no choice but to learn manners and various others things when it comes to them attending this kind of evening party, Rio aside who was attending the school for nobles, Miharu and co didn't know anything about this kind of manner.

It might be not a good idea to take them along to this kind of overbearing



evening party with their knowledge which is impossible for the current situation.

"That's natural, is there any need to say it. In the end it'll turn into us pressing even more trouble to Haruto-san..... That, is inexcusable"

Miharu was bowing deeply to Rio with a grateful expression.

It's definitely a foolish plan to meet with Satsuki by creating a smooth situation just for Miharu and co, he couldn't afford to do that even if it's just living in honesty like this.

Let alone returning their favor, with that accumulated in one person, it's feel inexcuseable, and vexing . [TL : 恩は返すどころか溜まっていく一方で、それが申し訳なくて、もどかしくもあった。]

"Something like that isn't a trouble you know"

Rio was pouring tea into the cup that already emptied before he know while saying that.

it's fragrant aroma is drifting and relaxing his mood.

When he's raising his eyes, Miharu's wearing an apologetic expression on her face, Rio smiled slightly.

"While I'm appearing in the debut party of Satsuki-san, I'm planning to make Miharu-san and the others to stay in the royal capital by booking the inn over there. The period won't even take two weeks"

"Ah, yes. Understood"

Miharu's replied to him thereupon, Aki and Masato also nodded at him.

Thus, accordingly.

"Uhm, the detail about oniichan is still unknown right"

Aki was timidly asking him.

"Sorry. It was Takahisa-kun. I am still unable to get the information regarding his whereabouts. Seeing that Satsuki-san became a hero, I think the possibilities is high for him to become a hero too but....."

# Part 8

"I..... See"

"It's on the level of rumor but, There's a leaking information regarding the existence of a hero in the Saint Stellar kingdom in the south of Galwark kingdom. If Takahisa-kun also belongs to a country, I think, sooner or later a existence like Satsuki-san will be announced to public. I'll tell you right away what kind of information I get in my hand"

"Yes. I'm looking forward to it"

Aki's quickly bowing at him.

At the very least, even if they only know the safety and whereabouts of Satsuki, half of the reason for Miharuru and co's anxiety also disappeared.

Though they still have their concern regarding the safety of Sendou Takahisa, the older brother of Aki and Masato, Rio already knew his whereabouts a bit prior to this.



Ascending to the roof from the ladder that was leaned, Miharuru was looking absentmindedly at the sky which dyed in twilight.

It's a beautiful sky which she can't meet so easily as it is in the earth.

Miharuru's long hair is waving due to gently drifting wind. [TL : Help me jake-san, Algebra-san, I can't the right expression for this] [ED: i can't think of anything either]

".....It made me want to see"

Miharuru's murmuring to the wind that's playing it's instrument by rustling the forest.

There was faint tears in her eyelids which was about to become frigid.

".....San"

Having noticed the voice that's seemingly come from below, after wiping her

tears in panic, Miharū's walking till the end of the roof and then looked below.

"Haruto-san....."

In that place, there was the figure of Rio looking up to Miharū.

Miharū's beautiful eyes opened wide when she's receiving Rio gaze.

When she's standing still as she's looking at Rio like that,

"Aren't you cold"

Rio was saying those words as if worrying about Miharū's body.

The season is just before spring, it'll be getting even colder when the evening comes.

Since Miharū's only wearing a black one piece tunic with simple lace, Rio's worrying that she might catch a cold.

"Yes. It's okay since I want to gaze at the sunset just a bit more"

Miharū replied with a gentle smile.

"Haruto-san. Thank you as usual"

Following after stretching her back, Miharū's telling her gratitude to Rio with a sincere expression.

"Eh....."

Rio tilted his head thinking about what she's grateful for.

"Fufu"

## Part 9

Miharu unintentionally laughs when she's looking at his expression.

Rio's unintentionally watching in fascination to that kind of her and keep standing right there like an idiot keep watching at Miharu without saying anything.

"Kyaa"

At that time, a slightly stronger wind is blowing in their vicinity which made Miharu letting out a short scream.

Miharu's skirt is swaying in lewdly, a pure white piece of cloth is reflected in Rio's field of vision.

""HEH""

Their voices overlap.

"....."

Rio immediately averted his line of sight with a beet red face.

"Fu-Fuee"

Even the finely shaped cheeks of Miharu dyed red like the color of a sunset.

Though she hurriedly pinned the cuff of her skirt, it was obviously seen when looking at Rio's reaction.

"A-A-A-I just showed something so unsightly....."

Miharu's bowing frantically with earth-shattering vigor while her eyes spun round and round.

"N-No, I'm also in the wrong"

Just like that he changed his line of sight to another direction while also apologizing.

"EEH"

Rio's looking at Miharu with a fleeting glance.



Miharu's face was hanging slightly while her body is slightly trembling from the embarrassment, she was looking at her feet.

That gesture of her is to Rio— —.

No, it didn't change at all with the childhood sweetheart of Amakawa Haruto.

Thereupon, when a strong wind is blowing again, Miharu was hurriedly pinning her skirt.

"Y-You should go down quickly you know. It's already dark outside, the wind is also blowing strongly"

Rio telling her with a high-pitched voice.

"Y-YES I'm going down now! "

Maybe due to her panic, Miharu's feet is moving awkwardly.

Rio quickly turned away his line of sight from her.

"Kyaa"

Rio immediately turned his face again when he hears Miharu's scream coming from the back.

Thereupon, the figure of Miharu who's about to fall down on the edge of the stairs is reflecting in his eyes.

## Part 10

"W-Watch out Mi-Cha..... "

Seeing her figure who lost her balance, Rio unconsciously almost called Miharu with the way he called her in their childhood.

He immediately shut his mouth as he jumps on to the roof immediately by strengthening his physical ability and then, softly propping Miharu's body as if hugging her as it is.

"AU....."

Miharu whose body was stiffened while shutting her eyes is twitching when her face is pushed on Rio's chest.

"Are you alright"

Rio asking while peering at Miharu's face.

"Y-Yes"

She timidly opened her eyes and nodded lightly.

Blinking incessantly as she looked at Rio's face.

"I'm glad then....."

Rio's breathing in relief.

Miharu's beautiful face which equipped with beautiful and long eyelashes, and bridge nose is reflecting in his eyes from point-blank range.

She was looking like a small animal whose body slightly stiffened in his arms.

"U~hm, that's....."

Miharu's eyes fixed on Rio face but, somehow that face is flushed red.

"How's your condition Did you twist your feet "

Cleverly guessing Miharu's condition, Rio's affirming her safety.

"Ah, no, that is, U~hm..... U~hm....."

Miharu's trying to say something in a hurry.

While her face becoming even redder as time passes.

"Ah, SORRY"

It seems she's embarrassed being hugged like that for a long time.

It was natural for her face to turn red.

Rio quickly takes some distance from Miharu when he noticed that.

"AH....."

A small voice leaked from Miharu lips.

She was adjusting her clothes with her idle hand which was seemingly about to stretched toward him.

Just like that, Miharu slowly raised her line of sight to Rio's face as if to peep on his expression with upturned eyes.

Her action will unintentionally tickle the protection instinct of men, though it's cruel if it's done when he's aware of this, it doesn't to be like this.

From this fact, he somehow guessed that Miharu have miniscule experience with men during her life so far, Rio judged that she might done that gesture unconsciously.

## Part 11

"....."

For some reason there was a long silence afterward between them.

During that time, a gentle breeze was blowing in their surrounding.

"Kushun" [TL : Sneezing]

Miharu suddenly let out a cute sneeze.

When Rio looked at her, his line of sight is changing to the stole which was wrapped on his neck.

"U~hm, since it's cold....."

Saying that, he removed the stole from his body and then wrapped it on Miharu's neck.

"T-Thank you very much....."

"I-It's nothing....."

The two was blushing awkwardly.

"It's warm"

Miharu said that as she grasped the stole on the base of her neck with both hands and pulled it closer to her face.

"Come to think of it, Miharu-san didn't have a muffler or stole right. It'll become out of season very soon but, let's buy it the next time we're outing. Though that one is for men, please feel free to use it till that time"

"E, A, Yes. Is it really okay "

"Yeah, I still have some left"

Rio's answering as he's secretly feeling embarrassed.

But, since the sun just hanged on the edge of the horizon which caused their surroundings to rapidly become darker, Rio's expression couldn't be seen clearly by Miharu.

This silence went on for 10 seconds.

"A-Uhm"

Miharu slowly opened her lips.

"Y-Yes"

Rio's straightening his posture.

"Uhm, Haruto-san, awhile ago....."

Though Miharu was about to probe something, her voice became so low at the second half.

The one metre long space between them became an invisible wall which interrupted Miharu's voice.

"Miharu-san"

"Ah, No. It's nothing"

Miharu swallowed the words that she was about to say while smiling at him.

"I, see"

"Yes. Let's go back inside. Since it should be about the time for Masato-kun to be hungry"

"You're right"

Rio agreed to her while unintentionally laughing with that remark.

"Come to think of it, Masato-kun said that he wanted to eat ramen but....."

"Well then, should we make it. Making an elaborate soup is difficult though. Ah, the ramen in this world is called as Kamutan"

The two then returned inside before their surroundings wrapped in darkness while unfolding such conversation.

---



# Chapter 86: Decision and Buying Full Dress

## Part 1

The date in which they should depart towards the Capital of Galwark Kingdom was fast approaching.

For the sake of purchasing a dress for the evening party that would be Satsuki's debut, Rio went to Almond with Celia.

"Ufufu"

Celia's mood while walking by his side was really good.

Maybe because she had her hair color changed with a magic tool for the outing, her atmosphere seemed slightly different from usual.

Her figure that walked by his side while humming merrily was a rather cute one.

Rio smiled lightly when he saw her like that,

"I'm sorry. Let's do the shopping for my goods together"

He talked to Celia.

"EH? Uhn. It's alright. Always staying indoor is bad for my body. Still, I'm not used to walking outside."

Rio accidentally let a "OOo" of admiration.

It was a positive and healthy statement he couldn't think would come from Celia who was practically a shut-in.

Even recently, she has been secluding herself in her room, immersing herself in her research.

Though it would be a good thing if she kept in mind this kind of exercise, and did it in her everyday routine— —.

As he thinks so, he looked at Celia with a sidelong glance, she was grinning from ear to ear.

If you asked what was in her mind at that moment.

(Because it's my long awaited chance to be alone with Rio. I'll make a full use of today ! Because of this and that, there hasn't even been a chance to go on an outing with just the two of us, moreover, we're taking a different action at that time.....)

She was truly on-fire inside.

Celia was a 21 years old girl whose appearance could be mistaken as a girl that hasn't reached the first-half of her teens.

The current her had her heart throbbing non-stop just because of walking beside her first love, albeit one that came a bit late.

And, one emotion that was utterly unknown for her.

"But, it's a bit refreshing right? Walking in the city with Cecilia, just the two of us like this. In the past we would meet like this in the laboratory"

Rio said that while feeling a slight nostalgia of those days.

Celia trembled when he suddenly said that.

"Eh ? Eh-T-That right. You brewed many good teas in those days. Uhm....."

Maybe because she was overly enthusiastic about it, Celia's tone was a bit shriller as she forgot the thing about walking beside Rio.

In the heaven sent situation of being alone together, though there were so many things she wanted to talk about, her desire couldn't come out with her voice.

Though she managed to feign calm, she knew herself that her face had become crimson red.

Regaining her composure with a cough, Celia decided to continue speaking with Rio.

## **Part 2**

"By the way, what kind of dress are you planning to wear ? If it's Haruto, I think something with a tailcoat would look extremely good"

"In reality, I'm truly poor regarding my own clothes. I came to buy my clothes

without knowing exactly what I want. That's why I think that I want my clothes to be chosen by Cecilia"

Rio replied as if waiting for the conversation.

The reason of bringing along Celia for a day like this was because he thought she would be dependable in the topic from the fact that she has attended many evening parties as a noble.

Though he said that he wants her help in choosing his clothes, since Rio had no confidence in his own sense of fashion, he depended completely on receiving Celia's recommendation.

"Yeah. I won't mind but, are you really okay with me ? I think that Miharu also has a good sense of fashion....."

After saying that, she added "You're on good terms with Miharu too, Rio" in a low voice.

But, her words didn't reach Rio's ears.

"Yes. Since when it comes to Cecilia, you have abundance of experiences attending evening parties, right? Moreover, I think you've a nice sense of fashion for clothing too. If it comes to Cecilia, since I felt I needed to ask someone to help me choose clothes which look good on me, you're the one I can rely on the most"

"I-Is that so ? Thank you....."

Celia felt embarrassed by his praise as she responded with her gratitude while blushing.

Despite not being too talkative a person, Rio was a surprisingly straight forward person when it came to expressing his feelings.

This dokidoki event like this is something that happens quiet often, it's as often as it happening so suddenly.

But, it was a little vexing that she was the only one being embarrassed.

"Then, should we increase our pace? See"

Thinking that she wanted to be the one who gave surprises sometimes, Celia

seized Rio's hand after mustering all her courage.

And then, though they were starting to walk at a faster pace, her gait was stranger than her usual one.

Rio also followed while being pulled by that kind of Celia.

"Wait a minute Cecilia. Aren't you walking too fast ? "

"I-I just said let's increase our pace right? Don't say something so miserable since you're a boy"

Let alone showing the composure of an adult, Celia's reply had many inconsistencies.

*As if I'm going to walk slowly*

When looking at her profile walking by his side, her face was definitely dyed red in embarrassment.

Being embarrassed and happy since she could hold Rio's hand, Celia was being immersed in bliss.

Her first objective of wanting to startle Rio had completely vanished.

As she walked with those feelings, the two of them arrived at the clothing store which handled the clothes that were made for the elites.

"Well then, should we choose now? Before that, I might not be able to do it if I don't know the size"

When their foot set upon the shop they were going to, Celia said those words with a lively voice.

Even if the shop sold clothes, rather than just selling ready-made clothes, it seems they also sold order-made ones.

Pulling her hand that held his hand since some time ago, Celia entered the shop along with Rio.

"Welcome. Thank you very much for visiting this shop. May I ask what you need today ? "

### **Part 3**

Two male employees who wore a uniform and were working in the store came to greet them.

"We came to buy him clothes for an evening party. First may we ask for measurement ? ? "

Celia replied with an air of someone used to shopping.

"Certainly"

After that, Rio was measured by the employee for his body size.

He entered the dressing room and obediently let them take the measurement while half-naked.

But, because the one who measured his size was a female employee, and she did it while slightly blushing, even Rio became slightly embarrassed.

(Is it because she's a new employee ? )

Rio had that kind of consideration.

After that, the employee reporting his size to Celia who had been waiting outside the room, while Rio dressed himself in the meantime.

He was not wearing all his clothes from before since he would be trying different clothes right after this.

When he left the dressing room while lightly dressed, Celia already started the search for his clothes.

She muttered something when discovering good looking clothes, and kept looking intently with one hand touching her chin.

"Ah, you finally left that room huh, Haruto"

Celia's smile bloomed with a "PA" when she noticed Rio.

After that, she brought the coat tail which was under her careful investigation.

"Yes. Well then, first, let's try this one"

She presented it to Rio while saying those words.

"Yes. Understood"



After returning to the dressing room with the clothes on hand, Rio changed his clothes with nimble movements.

"I've changed my clothes"

Rio announced that as he opening the partitioning cloth of the dressing room.

"Yeah. So it's like that, I see. It looks really good on you, you know?[\[i\]](#)"

Celia said that as she looked intently at Rio's whole body.

Rio smiled delighted at her words of praise.

As for Rio, though he felt that this one was already good enough.

"Well then, we should steadily try different ones. Since there are still so many choices left"

And then, Celia presented another tailcoat.

The length looked a bit longer than the previous one.

After receiving the tail coat, Rio smiled wryly and returned to the dressing room.

Rio repeatedly tried many different dresses after that, as if he was a dress-up doll to Celia.

He had already lost count and didn't even know how many clothes he had already tried.

Celia expression as she chose his clothes was extremely delighted, to the point that even Rio slightly enjoyed the experience.

#### **Part 4**

(I wonder if she's enjoying her current lifestyle even more than the previous one)

Rio thought of that when he saw Celia carefully looking at a new cloth with a happy feeling.

She might have some dissatisfaction with her current lifestyle, if she built some stress, she might not be able to show that kind of expression.

"Yeah. It's a perfect match"

When Rio put on the tail coat she decided to buy in the end, Celia said that as she nodding deeply with “uhnahn”.

"Thank you very much....."

Seeing his own self, which he's not used to seeing, in the full body mirror, Rio gave his gratitude with an uneasy voice.

It was somewhat embarrassing since he seemed different from the normal him.

It was an orthodox dark collared jacket and pants. The coat is long in the back side and separated like a swallow's tail [\[ii\]](#).

He was wearing a pure white vest under the jacket, and a black neck tie on his neck on top of the wing collar of his shirt.

There was a stylish ornament geared towards young men that brought about a simple and elegant atmosphere.

"Thank you very much. Please come again"

The two of them then left the shop as they were seen off by the employees.

"Hey, Haruto. You know, I. Just once, I'm thinking of going back to my home at Bertram Kingdom by traveling incognito"

On the way back, Celia timidly said those words with an expression of someone who made a decision.

Rio looked at Celia with his eyes wide open.

"AH, Please don't misunderstand it ! It's not like I'm dissatisfied with my current life ! I'm truly grateful to Haruto for bestowing a life where I can live without any dissatisfaction ! "

So, Celia told him that in a hurry.

Rio decided to hear what she wanted to say till the end.

"But. Though it's just natural, I escaped without saying anything to my family, since I didn't have any contact with them and just sent a letter. As expected, they must be worrying to death about me....."

Celia said that while looking for Rio's reaction.

"Sorry for saying this during this kind of busy time ! I was going to go alone while you were attending the evening party so as to not cause you anymore trouble but, I couldn't seem to find the right time to tell you about this....."

Celia said that while she bowing to Rio as if feeling truly apologetic about it.

"I understand the gist of it but, it's far you know. Cecilia"

Rio said that with a slightly shocked tone while sighing shortly.

## **Part 5**

"If you say it, I'll help you as many times as you want. Please don't do something like holding it in by yourself"

So he told her that in a way as if to persuade her while looking into her eyes.

"U-Uhn. Sorry....."

"Please don't apologize. I should be the one to notice it. I'm the one who should apologize"

"Ri..... H-Haruto isn't the one at fault ! Since this is my own selfishness ! "

Celia almost blurted Rio's name by reflex.

Though there was no need to call each other with an alias to the point of neurosis. Since there were some people near them, Celia shut her mouth in a panic and called him Haruto.

"Cecilia, it's a normal thing for a family to worry about the safety of family. This is not selfishness"

Rio shook his head in denial as he said so.

"But it's embarrassing isn't it? Though the things that I want are so many, it might be more convenient after the evening party"

No matter how much Celia worried her own family, the current her was an international class fugitive.

As expected, there's no way she could make a grand entrance home from the front.

If she's going to sneak in, the cooperation of Rio or Aisia will become

necessary.

And then, even if she returned home from the front, there was no guarantee returning to Rio will go smoothly.

Since her parents who worry for Celia, might oppose her leaving just like that.

It's quite possible that they are angry due to worry.

He didn't want to think about this, there's even the anxiety that she'll be coerced into another political marriage like before and then be put under house arrest.

Therefore, if possible, Rio also wanted to go together with her while watching from the shadow but, he didn't know how much time it'll take for her to arrive, seeing that he couldn't go back and forth between Celia and the house in the midst of the journey, it might be better if they go together after the evening party.

"There's a way where I send Aisia to escort you while I'm attending the evening party but....."

In that case, Miharuru and the rest must stay in the inn of the capital by themselves.

"..... You're anxious about them staying in the inn just with the three of them right ? "

So Celia asked as she guessed Rio's worry.

".....Yes. That is so"

"I'm also worrying about them you know. Ah, even so....."

As she said so an expression, as if she hit upon an idea, appeared on Celia's face.

After that, she showed a gesture of thinking about something by placing her finger on her lips.

"It might become a good experience if we're thinking about those children right?"

Celia replied with slight hesitation.

"A good..... Experience ? "

"Yeah, since basically there will not always be someone to protect them by their side. Though it's just for a while, I think they need to know how to live by themselves with just the three of them. Maybe it's similar to the field training which we do in the royal academy. See, isn't it because there are no teachers by their side during the field training that the students must act by themselves ? "

## **Part 6**

Celia explained the idea which suddenly came to her mind.

In short, it's gaining experience of the world for the sake of their maturity by using this chance.

Certainly, when he thought about it, he almost never let them act by themselves after they arrived in this world.

Just once, the time when Rio brings Celia, he let them house-sit.

Though the house sitting at that time is under the situation where there's no good hearted person in their surroundings, he didn't need to worry of them having any contact with the outside world.

It's completely different from a situation where they would live just the three of them in the city.

It's an irony that he, by caring for them like this, practically tossed them into a bird cage, doing that won't stimulate their mental growth.

"Certainly..... I must agree with you in this"

Rio nodded as he thought that she was right in this case.

"Well, a dangerous situation won't happen if they stay in a high class inn. But they'll come into a contact with many people other than us right? Even so, this is also our aim for them to gain some experience"

Miharu, Aki, and Masato never conversed properly with the people in this world other than Celia or Rio.

Just recently, they reached the point where they can do daily life conversation, despite its spartan nature it'll become good training to learn the



language on site.

According to Celia's words, she think that it's not a bad choice to using this chance for Miharuru and co to living amongst the people in this world since there's almost no potential danger will come upon them if they just living normally.

"Even if, for example, a strange fellow picked a fight with them, I'm sure they'll withdraw, as long as they're not too oblivious of the way of this world, after presenting the pendant that they got from you just the other day"

The matter of the pendant was an item which is the proof of the contract regarding the protection of Miharuru's group which is tied in a relationship with Liselotte.

There's a carving on this pendant that means that they're under the protection of Liselotte, if they present this, they'll receive unconditional protection from her.

The crest resembles Duke Kretia's house family crest, even if it's an influential person from this kingdom, if they're shown that pendant, that person won't think about coming at them from the front.

"I wish that they use that pendant in a true emergency. No, well, that would be under the assumption that the situation will be dangerous for them but....."

"No Pain No gain. A problem which you might see as small to the point of thinking there's no risk could be dangerous for Miharuru and the others. My opinion aside, if you feel like confirming it, why don't we ask them about what they want after we return to the house ? "

"You're, right..... Let's just ask them about it"

The so called *"If you love your children, then throw them out to the world"*.

Rio will wait and see for the timing to look at their situation by slipping out from the royal castle. If he dislikes it, it might be better if they stay along with Aisia and Celia.

After hesitating for a while, though he felt anxious about it, he showed a considerable will.

"Fufu, please think about it carefully, if you need consultation I'll get on board as much as you want. By the time you make your judgment, I'll respect it"

"Thank you very much"

## Part 7

Rio gave his gratitude as he smiled gently at her.

"Well, then let's change the topic. What do you think? You've learnt manners in the royal academy but, this should be your first time attending something like an evening party right? Are you confident in yourself?"

Celia said that with a cheerful tone as if trying to brighten the slightly heavy mood.

"What should I do? I feel anxious since it's already been so many years and I never practiced it"

Rio replied with a wry smile.

"Uhn. Language should be no problem in Haruto's case but, if you like it, should I give a small lecture in manners? Even if it's something like dance, I'll teach you if you're not confident with it"

Even if Celia's normally like that, it doesn't mean that she is a high ranking noble's daughter just for show.

Despite having a shut-in like constitution, she couldn't completely sever her interaction with other nobles, the person herself has the experience of attending evening parties.

It's a tremendous advantage if he were to receive a class about manners from Celia.

"Thanks god. May I ask for it then?"

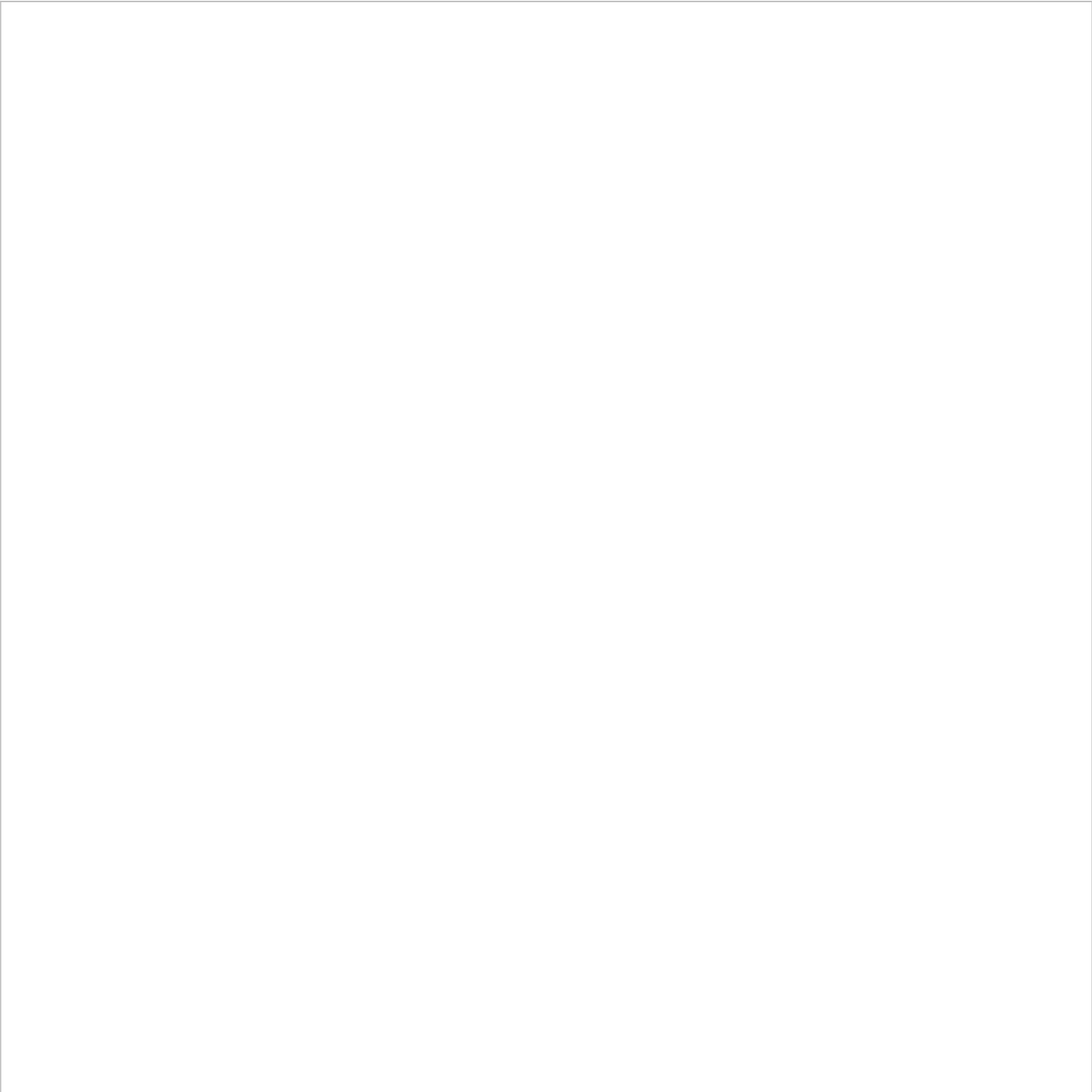
"Yeah, leave it to me!"

Celia replied while puffing her modest chest.

Maybe because she was happy that she could be a help to Rio, that expression of hers was a truly bright one.

[i] [TL : Tail coat = butler, you know where this come from right]

[\[ii\]](#) [TL : Butler uniform] Ed: A photo of a coat tail



# Chapter 87: Coming Toward The Capital of Galwark Kingdom

## Part 1

When moving with Miharuru and co toward the capital of Galwark kingdom, Rio's currently making a return trip to Almond for the sake of going together with Liselotte.

For the time being, it's been decided that the talk called staying in the inn just the three of Miharuru, Masato and, Aki will be postponed, Aisia and Celia will also be going along with them toward the capital.

Whether they're acceptable for lodging in the inn with just the three of them was depending on whether or not they can judge regarding the safety in the surrounding area such as the quality of the customer of the inn or the public order of the vicinity.

Since there might be a need for Aisia to do that during their stay in the capital, as for Celia, it's decided that they'll be waiting for a short while for now to go to Bertram kingdom.

For example, even if it's decided that Miharuru, Masato and, Aki will stay in the inn with just the three of them, the number of the days they'll be staying just the three of them will become just several days at most even for the longest one from the beginning of the month.

Their current stay in the capital is also serving as experimental training for the language competency of Miharuru and co about how far they can do in everyday life.

During the 5 people discussion, excluding Rio, regarding the communication that they'll be carrying out with the people of the inn, it's been decided that they'll go with scale priority of place, origin and, class. [TL : Not quite sure with this sentence—リオを除く五人の話し合いで、宿屋の人間とのコミュニケーションは率先して地球出身組が行うと決まった。 Any idea?]

The current Miharū and co was like a bird in the cage, ignorant of the way of the world.

But, Even if they should never lodge with just the three of them, the matter regarding living in the city will become a good experience for them.

Contrary to Rio's worry, Masato is really eager with that idea, he's leaping in joy with *"It's okay if they can stay in the inn with just the three of them"*.

And then, there's also a strong request coming from Masato, though with some condition attached, to Rio's dismay, they decided to stay in the inn with just the three of Masato, Aki and, Miharū.

Assault, wound, theft, threat, robbery, fraud, abduction, kidnapping and rape—— Those kind of crimes happening in the city is not something unusual.

Therefore, the people in this world has been accepting those crimes as an everyday occurrence, and led a life where they're staying next to those crimes.

The valid self-defense method is there for them to act consciously in order for them to not meet such crimes, if it's the people who live in the city, it's a normal thing for them to learn how to sense those dangers.

Either way, Miharū and co can't go without knowing if there's a possibilities to keep living by mingling with the cities . [TL : Not to sure about this—いずれも美春達が都市と関わって生きていく可能性があるのならば知っておかないといけないことだ。]

Rio thoroughly told those five regarding those sense of danger.

The three of Miharū, Aki and, Masato is just a fact, Celia's a noble girl who lived a sheltered live, Aisia also have some ignorant points in the feeling of the human as a spirit.

But, the country is also taking part in the defense of the inn where Miharū and co is staying at, watch-keeper soldiers has been standing guard, the public order is good.

If they're not recklessly moving to the dangerous places with bad public order away from the inn, the danger might be quite low.

Though in price, it's mainly for the rich and influenced people, an inn is still an

inn even if it's geared for wealthy people.

It's different when it's comes to provincial town, it's not an establishment for the people who have power who can send villains to one-sidedly deal with the opponent who's entangling with them is staying at [\[i\]](#).

Nevertheless, though there's no absolute warranty that this kind of noble won't come to stay, he won't be able to do anything if he thinks that far.

*(It's okay. Let's just trust everyone)*

While walking in the quiet residential area in Almond, Rio's slightly lamenting the fact that those five are already taking different action.

Rio will be spending a short time with Liselotte after this.

That time is certainly when they're moving till the capital of Galwark kingdom, he must act within eyesight of Liselotte during his stay.

It might have the meaning of monitoring or she can't leave him alone to act impudently.

Rio also planned to not making a reckless action except if the situation called for it.

"Haruto-sama. Welcome, and please come in"



# Part 2

The chamberlain Cosette was coming out to greet him when Rio's arriving at Liselotte's mansion.

She lightly raised the hem of her long skirt with both hands and then made an elegant bow to him.

There's elegance and humbleness behind that conduct, she's wearing her neat and clean maid uniform which is colored with contrast of black and white and yet, the charm of an adult which will even charming girls alike which is Cosette's natural gift was drifting around.

"Good day. Cosette-san"

They've met several times already, Rio also greeted her with a natural posture.

"Yes. Good day too. Today too, I who's received the countenance of Haruto-sama like this is very fortunate right"

So Cosette said that while letting out her impish smile.

"It's a flattery right. I'm also really happy for being granted to be received by Cosette-san"

Rio's replied immediately with a smile.

"Well, Thank you very much for that praise. Well, follow me this way please. Since I'll also go down with the explanation regarding the message and the schedule after this"

Rio entered Liselotte's mansion while being guided by Cosette.



In a certain waiting room of the chamberlain located in Liselotte's mansion.

The three of Cosette, Natalie and, Chloe was taking a break as they're sitting on the sofa in that place.

"Haruto-sama. Is quite a formidable opponent isn't he"

After drinking the cooled black tea, Cosette started to slowly talk about that. Natalie's staring in wonder to her remark.

"Wha, you ! Could it be that you're aiming for Haruto-sama ? "

She asked with a flustered face.

Cosette is doing completely well with her assigned job, and her professional attitude is also known as an extremely favourable chamberlain.

Her attitude of receiving guests is kind, and friendly while having elegance in it, her appearance is also considerably well toned even amongst the chamberlain unit of Liselotte which is composed of beautiful women, she's an amorous woman with a attractive body.

Therefore, the people who make a pass at Cosette amongst the guests who came to the mansion is also not few in number.

Sometimes, Cosette will act nonchalantly to the point that it's not leaving any influence in her job in order to greeting after the men who suited with her judgement.

In the case that the guest is satisfied with Cosette's judgement, for the sake of having transaction with advantageous condition by attracting the guest with her charm, even Liselotte is leaving her alone while fully aware of the amorous woman behaviors of Cosette.

"Ara, isn't that just natural. Graceful look, a manner in which you can feel his educated and elegance, moreover, strength that matches Aria, women will die out for ignoring this kind of fine man" [TL\* : Majority of noble women in Bertram is obsolete] [ED: well he was hiding his strength and magic so doesn't make it as bad]

Cosette's looking at Natalie who's answering nonchalantly.

"Haruto-sama is an important guest of Liselotte-sama you know. What will you do if you unintentionally made him angry"

In the case that a guest is visiting Liselotte's mansion, their information will be noticed to the chamberlains beforehand such as their preferance, personality and, the importance of the visitor.

Due to the previous raid in Almond, the current Rio's being treated as VIP amongst Liselotte's chamberlain, she sent notice to the chamberlains to give him the best treatment.

## Part 3

"The understanding regarding the true character of the male guest is included in my job description you know. Even if I become moderately closer to Haruto-sama, it's during my work you know"

"That certainly feels like that but..... In your case, aren't you trying to become closer with wicked intentions ! "

"Arara, you're as serious as ever aren't you. Because you're like that, you can't get even one man no matter how many times passed you know"

And then, Cosette is responding with a easygoing tone.

"Please don't change the subject ! We're nothing more than chamberlains who's receiving the guests in this mansion you know. Because of that we can't carelessly outstretch our hand to the guest. M-Moreover, you're also without a man yourself even now aren't you"

"It's because I'm not a little girl who will rush to love in a straight line, there's no way I can act carelessly in the matter of male-female relationship right. It's because I know how much delineation which won't affecting my work you know"

Cosette said that with a composed expression.

In reality, Cosette's never causing bad influence in her work regarding her approaching the guest.

The guest who's pleased with Cosette is great in number, the produced result is only a nice thing for Liselotte.

"E-Even so, Haruto-sama is younger you know ? "

"You're as stubborn as ever isn't it. Several years of age difference have nothing to do in adult male-female relationship isn't it"

Cosette's boasting about that with a beautiful and alluring smile.

The newcomer Chloe was listening attentively with great interest to them who's bickering like that.

"A-Adult relationship between man and woman....."

Chloe's gulping while muttering those words.

"You're definitely aiming for Haruto-sama too but, was it for different matter ? Even if you don't seem to be reeking by the hand of the inexperienced Natalie, this side might be better for you right"

Cosette's sending a fleeting glance at Natalie while saying some suggestive lines.

"W\_what do you mean by that ? "

"It's exactly as I say you know. I said it in the beginning right. Haruto-sama is quite a formidable opponent" [TL : Unbreakable Beauty Magnet]

When she's told about that with a triumph expression, pursuing further will undoubtedly cause offence, Natalie was loss at words.

"W-What kind of man is he. I mean, Haruto-sama ? "

Thereupon, Chloe who was silently listening up till now was interrupting the conversation from the side.

"Though it doesn't mean that he have experience with women, he's a gentleman who isn't timid when facing women. Even if he's a friendly person who's easy to talk to but, he's sensitive with his distance with people and his personal space is wide. Yeah, it's the sort with high guard but, he's the type who's extremely caring for those who is intimate with him"

## Part 4

Cosette stated the true personality of Rio which she analyzed during the few times she met him while laughing with “fufu”.

"I see, Your observation is as splendid as ever. It's only limited to men though"

Natalie's looking at Cosette with a dull expression.

"Thank you. I'll receive those words as a complement"

Cosette's saying her gratitude with a wide grin floating on her face.

"U-Uhm. Then, what should I do to come in good terms with a person like Haruto-sama ? "

Chloe is asking with a timid tone.

"A person like Haruto-sama, I see. Perhaps Chloe's also aiming for Haruto-sama"

Cosette's grinning widely while saying that.

"Y-You're misunderstand ! Uhm, it's because he saved my mother and little sister. Thus I want to say my gratitude to him ! "

Chloe waved her hands in a hurry with a flushed face.

Cosette and Natalie's showing a reassuring smile which says "We understand you know" to Chloe who's frantically saying "It's the truth ! ".

Thus, when Chloe have calmed down, their conversation is returning to the original subject.

"Unexpectedly, I feel that he won't be so cruel if you keep attacking from the front. But, that's a difficult tactic when it comes to someone of our standing right. When it comes to that, the remaining method is nothing but steadily shortening our distance with him but....." [TL : I'm scared of Cosette]

Cosette stopped talking when she reached that point.

""But..... ? ""

The voice of Natalie and Chloe is overlapping.

"The point beyond that will be depending on your experience in love right. Becoming closer to the point that he won't use polite language, because we have to conduct ourself in order for ourself to be bitten by him. That's why I said to Natalie that he's a difficult one"

Cosette's talking as if being glad with it, Natalie pursed her lips.

"Keep attacking..... Just saying your gratitude is not an expression of love....."

Though Chloe's muttering in low voice, that voice didn't reach Natalie's and Cosette's ears.

"I'm sorry. Please don't get angry over this. Based on his origin and relationship with Liselotte-sama, he wasn't the kind of person who you should approach in a hurry with half-hearted feelings you know"

Looking at her state, Cosette's bowing obediently toward Natalie.

"I know that much"

"You're right. But, isn't there a saying that *"Love is blind"* ? "

Saying that, Cosette's looking at Chloe who's nonchalantly thinking about something.

Looking at the person herself aside, Natalie's guessed her intention from her line of sight.

Cosette's showing a slightly wry smile and then,



# Part 5

"That's why I'll give you advice if you're really aiming at him"

Said that with cheerful voice.

Natalie's letting out a short sigh.

Though this kind of indirect attention like this seemingly as if she's half-hearted with it, that's by no means why she's not hating Cosette.

Perhaps their entire conversation up till now have something to do with the education for Chloe, the young newcomer who's still 13 years old.

Though there's still the mystery whether the current Chloe's falling in love with Rio or not, that probability isn't low.

It's been a long time in itself to the point of her working along with Cosette, might be the reason Natalie's somehow on a good term without considerable quarrel up till now with her.

"Of course I'll also aim for him in my own way if the chance has come"

Cosette's adding those line without being reserved about saying it.

*"I'm taking back what I said before."* [Natalie]

*"As I thought, I just can't be in good terms with her."* [Natalie]

Thus Natalie's letting out a short sigh while reconsidering her evaluation of Cosette.



Under the clear sky of spring seaon, a ship vessel was flying forward against the clouds instead of waves.

There was a figure like a wooden sailing boat being binded at the iron pier at it's hull, it has wings installed to get levitation power.

That is an artifact which was created during the Demon-God War Era, magic ship.

Though it can be said that several of it existed in the countries all over the

Strahl region the overall won't reach several hundreds, it needs a large amount of magic stones as it's fuel, starting with the system of the ship, since it have many difficult place in the current era magic knowledge even for maintenance of the core parts, along with skyrocketing price for each one of it. [TL : Not too sure about the structures of this sentences, 現存する数はシュトラール地方全土にわたって数百は下らないと言われているが、燃料となる魔石を大量に必要とし、船の機関を始めとした心臓部の整備も現代の魔法知識では困難な個所が多いため、一隻一隻に青天井の値段がつけられる代物だ。-Any help?]

Rio was boarding on the magic ship since Liselotte's the owner.

In the first place, it's not a vehicle in which a normal person can board on it, though he has seen one before, this is practically his first time boarding on it.

After leaving Almond and advancing toward the northeast, the capital of Galwark kingdom is appearing.

Though at first Rio was sure that they'll be moving by carriage, it was thanks to the magic ship that they can fully enjoy the air travel.

"I'm astonished with the level of comfort of the magic ship. It's doesn't shake as much as I thought"

"Above all, if there's one, it give a pleasant feeling"

In one room inside of the ship, Rio was having an idle talk while drinking tea with Liselotte.

Though it doesn't mean that it's spacious like the room in her mansion, it's ensuring plenty of space for relaxation, there's cozy space made by decorating it with stylish decorations.

"Nevertheless, it's a wonderful cake isn't it. Was Haruto-sama the one who made it? "

Liselotte's smiling with an expression of one that is in great delight, she's happily eating the pound cake made by Rio and Miharu with charming and elegant conduct.

"Yeah, it's my delight for receiving your praise"

Rio's nodding with smile on his face as he saying that.

"Haruto-sama's dishes is splendid isn't it. The chocolate which I ate before was extremely delicious too. This cake also mellow and completed as the best dish by pouring refined sweet chocolate on top of it"

## Part 6

Liselotte who sat facing Rio was smiling ear to ear.

Lacking of sarcasm, it's a smile which made you think that it's coming from her true feelings.

Though Rio was feeling it when he gave the chocolate from before, it seems that Liselotte's really fond of sweet food.

(This child too, if she was reincarnated in a similar case with me and Latifa, I wonder what kind of child she was in her previous life)

Maybe because their chance for this kind of meeting has increased recently, Rio suddenly thought of that.

As he was enjoying the aroma of black tea while pondering about such things, his line of sight's overlapping with Liselotte.

She was staring at Rio, seemingly wanting to say something.

"Is there something on my face ? "

"Ah, No. Uhm....."

Liselotte's words stagnated in the middle.

"Is there something you want to ask me ? If you don't mind, please let me to hear it"

When Rio's trying to test the water, Liselotte's opened her lips while hesitating.

"Uhm, though we've been meeting like this so many times, I don't know too many things about Haruto-sama....."

With a tinge of pink on her cheeks, Liselotte's facing slightly downward.

It seems she's also thinking about similar things as Rio.

If he's expressing the relationship between them, it becomes something related to business but, it's forcing a reply from the other party implicitly for that question.

Therefore, in regard to the business scene, doing something like asking about private matter to the other party is a manner that must be avoided.

Especially if it's something like questioning the superior other party, the damage because of such discourtesy conduct is also not small.

Though both sides didn't inquire about private matters more than necessary up till now, there's also the matter of their distance getting closer bit-by-bit which reaching the point that they're having a meeting like this everyday.

If ones thinking of building a more intimate relationship, this area might become the boundary which determines their relationship from now on.

So Liselotte's trying to step her foot into that boundary with abandon.

In case of men, her cute action might trigger themselves to voluntarily talking about themselves but.

"I see. It's as you say"

Rio made an agreeable response with calm tone.

Rio too as her current business partner, it's not like he doesn't have a great interest regarding Liselotte.

Though it doesn't mean that he's wishing for it, the flow of the current conversation wasn't bad for talking about it.

After that, they're starting to tell the other party about themselves bit-by-bit while doing a brief self-introduction.

The topic related to tea made their conversation especially heated.

"Though blend tea tastes good too, the hurdle for my demand is high, so flavored tea is there for your own to adjust to my liking you know"

"Well, certainly, I want to taste the tea prepared by Haruto-sama"

## Part 7

After Accompanying and receiving the influence of tea-loving Celia during his royal academy era, receiving invitation for tea time by Oufia in seirei no tami village, Rio's one way or another, has many experience regarding tea.

Thus, because the people in his surrounding drink tea. that was how he became a competent tea connoisseur.

Nowadays, he blends his own tea leaves, he's infusing flavor to the tea leaves to make his own original tea, there's even various trial products which he made along with Miharu.

Liselotte in front of him included, her love for tea surpassing Rio and standing on the same level as Celia, since they found a common topic which became the clue of their conversation, their conversation became even more lively.

"That's right. Since I need to bring some things, if you're okay with with it, please try it later"

"Well, I'll be waiting for it"

After saying that, Liselotte showed an impish bring the cup of tea to her lips.

It's a pleasant conversation for a short while after that and then, the time of separation finally comes.

"Well then, I'll excuse myself then. I'm delighted to be able to spend such a pleasant time"

"That's, I wish to say something. I'm truly grateful that you want to accompany me during the afternoon tea time. Since we will arrive anytime soon, please wait for it while sightseeing the scenery outside or returning to your room"

Saying so, after exchanging greetings at each other, Rio leaves Liselotte's room.

The sunlight that was coming from the sky and deck already changed color to red.

The evening sun that was floating in the far horizon is shining brightly.

The scenery which he can look out till faraway at the horizon of the continent is surely suitable to be said as "*Picturesque scenery*".

The mountain that was rising from the ground, the canyon that bore deep into the ground, the forest that was spreading till a far distance, the lake that is spreading vast and far, there's a plain with flowing rivers.

There's viewing the diminutive city which scattering intermittently and then, he felt just how tiny he is.

That scenery is completely sucking his soul, it's truly a fantastic scenery.

As the scenery which he was watching from the magic ship quickly fades into twilight, Rio's about to turn his heel toward his own room.

It was at that time.

"A-Uhm ! Haruto-sama ! "

Rio halted his foot by reflex in hearing the voice of a girl who became stiff due to nervousness.

When he's turning around to look at the origin of that voice, standing at that place was Chloe who's also the retainer of Liselotte.

Her age might be similar to Aki, her face which still retaining some of her innocence seemingly stiff for some reason.

"Chloe-san was it. Good day too. May I ask your business ? "

When he's nodding with a light smile hovering on his face to the slowly approaching Chloe, Rio asked her business with a gentle expression.

"Y-Yes. Uhm....."

Maybe because Chloe's too excited about something, she then taking a deep breath with a appearance of someone making a resolution,

"Thank you for what you did some time ago ! "

She bowed vigorously toward Rio.

"Yes. Uh~m, could it be about Mirey-chan and Rebecca-san ? "



## Part 8

Him receiving gratitude from Chloe, there's nothing but one event which comes to Rio.

It might be the matter of him saving Chloe's mother and little sister who was attacked by the demon who was coming to attack Almond sometime ago.

"Ye-Yeah. I, at that time, my mother..... I didn't have any choice since I'm worrying about my mother and little sister. I was truly relieved at that time when Haruto-sama brought them along to the mansion"

So, while showing a tottering appearance, Chloe's telling him about her mental state during that time.

Maybe because their ages are close, her appearance is overlapped with Latifa and Aki.

"When I'm hearing from mother about the detailed even later, I became truly frightened in what would happen if Haruto-sama didn't happen to pass by that place....."

At that time, if Rio didn't choose to take that path, there's no doubt that Chloe's mother, Rebecca and Chloe's little sister, Mirey might be tormented to death by the orc and the goblin.

Even if Natalie passed by later, it's certainly already too late for them.

Chloe's feeling really grateful toward Rio from the fact that the worst result is lying in waiting if there's even one mistake.

"That's why I want to properly say my gratitude ! Thank you very much for saving my mother and little sister ! "

Though there's some clumsiness in Chloe's action, it was refreshing that she's come straight to expressing her gratitude.

"It's nothing, both of them are safe and sound is the best result you know. Was there no change to them after that ? "

Rio's asking the condition of Mirey and Rebecca after that event.

"Yes. My mother and little sister is as lively as usual. Both of them said that they definitely want to give something to Haruto-sama"

"No, their feeling is already enough. I'm happy enough receiving their gratitude till we're arriving at the mansion that day. Please don't worry about a gift"

Rio's putting his hand on his head and gently turning down their gift of gratitude.

"N-No ! That won't do ! Please allow me to express my gratitude properly !  
"

But, Chloe is unexpectedly so tenacious about it.

Rio was slightly taken aback.

"Ah, M-My apologies ! "

Chloe's hurriedly apologizing maybe because she's realizing that she became too zealous about it.

"Don't worry, I don't mind about it....."

A slightly awkward atmosphere's following after that

"My deepest apologies. I'm truly regretting the fact that I didn't say my gratitude properly..... I decided to properly convey my gratitude like this time....."

## Part 9

Chloe apologized in a anticlimaxed situation while hanging her face down awkwardly.

"So that was it....."

As long as looking at Chloe's slightly over-reaction, it might be how much she's regretting her past action.

Though it was nothing but a one chance of encounter, Rio still remembered that Chloe was a more friendly and cheerful girl.

When they met for the first time, she's smiling cheerfully while slightly forcing Rio to follow her by arm.

Of course Rio's and Chloe's current relationship is different with that time in the past, though he won't be able to see her being too over-familiar, he already can't feel her bottomless cheerfulness which she had before from the current her.

Maybe because her youthful trait has calmed down during these few years, maybe she became slightly aware about the distance with people due to a past event, or there might be another reason.

But, that place is not an area where he should be stepping into——, Rio's feeling that way,

"I've said sometime ago, I already properly received your feeling of gratitude"

He said that to persuade her.

"Thank you for properly expressing your gratitude, I'm able to properly accept Chloe-san's feeling"

Rio adds other words following after that.

"Y-Yes"

"Isn't it supposed to be enough just by saying 'thank you' or 'I'm sorry' without overworking on it. When Chloe-san's too nervous, the other party will ended up nervous too right "

"just one expression. 'Thank you' or 'I'm sorry' ....."

Maybe because she has something in her mind, when Chloe's muttering those words repeatedly so many times over— —

"It's the capital~ ! "

The voice of the crew on the deck resounded.

Author Note :

Magic ship made it's appearance just in name in the chapter 14

[\[i\]](#) [TL\* : A place which is unsuitable to set an ambush or assassination]

# Chapter 88: Dinner With Duke Kretia House

## Part 1

The magic ship which carried them departed from Almond in the morning and advanced northeast, sailing towards the capital of Galwark kingdom in slightly less than half day.

The maximum speed of the magic ship was roughly around 110 knots<sup>[1]</sup>, but when cruising normally it moved at half the speed to have effective fuel consumption.

Though it was not as fast as when Rio flew at full speed, it was still considerably fast.

"I saw it~ ! It's the capital ! We'll be arriving to the capital soon ! "

The voice of the crew member that was standing in the ship's mast look out resounded in the cabin.

"It seems we've almost reached the capital. That seems like the capital"

He could already confirm the view of the capital from the deck.

Rio said that to Chloe who was standing in front of him.

"Ah, yes. It's ..... Beautiful, isn't it"

While agreeing with him, Chloe was captivated by the scenery of the capital, especially the gigantic white conspicuous wall structure inside the city, or better known as the royal castle of Galwark Kingdom.

The orchard and grain-producing regions that were spread in the surroundings of the capital, it seemed like what is supporting the livelihood of the capital.

Maybe because they heard the report, bit-by-bit, the other people appeared to look at the scenery of the capital, the deck quickly turned into a noisy place.

"Well then, since they've already made preparation for landing. I'll go back to my room for the time being"

"YES ! Thank you very much ! "

Separating from Chloe, Rio took his leave from the deck and turned on his heel.

After cruising around 10 minutes more since then, the magic ship landed on the gigantic lake located to the east of the capital.

Though the magic ship could park on land too, the place in which most private harbors were located was in places with a lot of water such as in a lake or at sea.

The magic ship which advanced from south west passed the capital and arrived towards the sky of the east lake.

"Starboard"

"Starboard"

The voice of the steering crew and the ship Captain in the bridge resounded.

After repeating the order of the ship Captain, the steering crew turned the steering wheel to the right.

"Starboard 15 degree"

So, the steering crew told the captain.

The magic ship turned around its head towards the right, and then started to circle the capital seemingly drawing a big arc.

"Turn back the steering wheel ! "

"Steer to the center ! "

When the magic ship started heading towards the harbor, the steering crew who followed the order of the ship captain and returned the steering wheel to 0 degree.

"To the target ! "

"7 degrees ! "

Now he turned the steering wheel slightly to the left and then, the force of the ship which circled to the right killed its momentum.

## Part 2

"Direction, 270 degrees~"

The ship captain ordered the direction he wanted the ship to go.

"Yo~soro~, course, 270 degrees"

When he took the direction that was ordered, the steering crew reported it.

"Advance at very slow speed, descend at a very slow speed"

"Advancing at very slow speed, descending at a very slow speed, yo~soro~"

When the ship approached the harbor of the capital in the west part of the lake, the magic ship descended slowly as its distance with the lake below narrowed bit-by-bit.

"All members, prepare for impact ! "

The captain spoke towards the speaking tube.

When the magic ship landed upon the surface of the water as if getting sucking into it and creating waves.

It arrived to the harbor while moving through the surface of the lake, the people who were watching and the crew skillfully worked to prepare to dock.

When fixing the ship to the harbor with a rope, the ramp was installed which made movement to and from the ship possible.

"Liselotte-sama ! Preparation complete ! "

The ship captain told Liselotte who was looking at the situation from the deck.

"Thank you very much, everyone. Please have fun after this till the time we return to Almond"

"You chaps ! Did you hear that ! It's the holiday which we desired, finish your work fast ! "

"OU ! "

The voice of the crew resounded on board and started to act at once.

Liselotte smiled as she saw them.



"Well then, Haruto-sama. Since the preparation has been completed, please go towards this place"

Saying so, Liselotte went ashore accompanied by Rio.

The four of Chloe, Cosette, Natalie and Aria, walked as chamberlain escorts in order to protect those two.

Thereupon, a man who seemed to be at the end of his teens approached the deck.

Though he looking like an extraordinary military man from his muscular body, his outfit was not that of a military man, it was a steward's or butler's uniform.

"Please excuse me for my long silence, Liselotte-sama"

After bowing respectfully, the man called out to Liselotte.

"Ara, Richard. You're as lively as ever, aren't you? If you're already in this place, maybe honored father and mother are also here ? "

Conversing like they known each other, Liselotte asked for his reply in a friendly manner.

It seems the man called Richard was her acquaintance.

Rio guessed that he might be a person who serves Duke Kretia's house.

Part 3

"Yes. Certainly, both honored masters have been waiting eagerly to be able to meet Liselotte-sama again"

"Indeed. Could it be that Pascal-niisama and George-niisama have come too ? "

"George-sama has gone towards his fiancée's house. He left after saying that he'll be attending Hero-dono's debut party"

"Indeed. Understood. Well, it'll not be immediately but, maybe we'll go to the mansion"

"Your pleasure. Incidentally, please excuse my rudeness but, could it be that personage over there is Haruto-sama ? "

Richard asked that question when his line of sight moved towards Rio who stood beside Liselotte.

"Yeah, this person is Haruto-sama who saved me during Almond's monster raid some time ago "

So, Liselotte introduced Rio.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Haruto. Hereafter, pleased to make your acquaintance"

Rio introduced his name while bowing politely so as to not show discourtesy to the other party.

"Oh, it's my first time meeting you. I've heard about you from the report. My deepest gratitude for saving Liselotte-sama"

Richard expressed his gratitude with a friendly smile.

Though it might be just natural to know Rio, since his deeds were conveyed along with the matter regarding Almond's raid some time ago.

"No, since I only slayed the demons who came at myself"

"It doesn't change the fact that you saved Ojousama. My apologies for saying it this late. I'm Richard. I'm working as the butler of Cedric Kretia-sama, Liselotte-sama's father. A pleasure to make your acquaintance"

Richard bowed politely while greeting him.

"Yes. Me too, please treat me well"

Rio's also bowing at him.

"Well then, please follow me. This way please"

After that, they followed the guidance of Richard, and headed towards Duke Kretia's house in the royal capital.

The noble district was close to the harbor.

Or rather, the main street stretched from the royal castle till the harbor located at the southeast of the capital, the noble district was location is between that two[\[2\]](#).

Moreover, establishments related to war were everywhere, thick lines of defense laid out in the east part of the capital.

Solid buildings made of stone stood in rows everywhere, the surroundings were wrapped in a quiet atmosphere.

"It's already on sight. That one is the royal capital villa of the Duke Kretia house"

The royal capital villa of Duke Kretia house was located extremely close to the royal castle when compared to the other villas in the noble district.

A wonderful ornament was shown at the solid metal gate which was erected at the center of a splendid brick wall that surrounded the Duke's land.

A solemn white walled building with relatively brand new artistic style was towering everything else at the far side of the wall and gate.

Even the interior was definitely installed with elaborate ornaments.

#### **Part 4**

The garden had a geometric style and the road that lead towards the building after entering the site could be seen, there was quite a distance to reach the mansion from the gate.

Even when comparing it with the mansions of the other nobles that stood in the surroundings, the royal capital villa of Duke Kretia house is no doubt a very wonderful one.

It only served as evidence that Duke Kretia's house is prospering.

""Solemnity"" is the right word for expressing the garden of this nice mansion. It's overwhelming to the point that I was unintentionally captivated by it"

Rio told his impression after seeing the mansion and its garden.

He was telling the truth and, if he was the one who lived in this mansion, a simple design would be more to his liking than an artistic design, he would most likely end up with mental fatigue.

But, if it's for appreciating the artistic style, the mansion in front of him in fact even made him feel that it's a wonderful building.

"Fufu, this mansion was constructed under the command of my father but, I feel that it's a bit too showy for a living place. It's just necessary to build a suitable mansion in the capital to show the power of the house. Noble society is troublesome right?"

Liselotte said that while showing a playful smile.

"..... My condolences. Which reminds me, Liselotte-sama's mansion in Almond has a simple design and yet is beautiful. The truth is I feel that way too, if it's for a place to live, I prefer a design like your mansion's"

Rio replied with a wry smile.

"That's right. I also feel that settling permanently in this kind of mansion will cause mental fatigue"

Liselotte agreed while smiling lightly to Rio's reply.

When they entered the mansion after that, as expected, gorgeous ornaments which captivated the eyes could be seen, Rio let out a brief sigh in admiration.

The entrance hall was also ornamented with the typical carving, the room itself seemed more like a piece of art.

Just like that, they kept walking through a passage that was surrounded by white plastered stone walls, Rio was guided towards the dining room.

"Please wait while sitting over here. We're about to have a banquet. I'll be going to call Liselotte-sama's parents soon"

After entering the room, Richard urged Rio to sit on a chair.

"Excuse me then"

Rio nodded as he took his seat.

On the other hand, Liselotte didn't immediately take her seat,

"Haruto-sama, I'll also excuse myself for a while"

She skillfully told so and left the room at once.

"Yes. Certainly"

After Rio say so, Liselotte left the room being followed by her four exclusive

chamberlains.

Richard also left the room along with them and in exchange, the chamberlain of the mansion came in.

"Excuse me"

## **Part 5**

The chamberlain started to make tea with graceful movements.

Rio silently observed the interior of the room with sidelong glances.

It was a truly luxurious dining room.

Antique furniture were placed inside the room, stained glass was set at the big windows to add color to the room.

"Here you go, please enjoy"[Chamberlain]

The chamberlain suddenly presented the cup with tea to Rio.

"Well then. Please enjoy it slowly" [Chamberlain]

After saying those words, the chamberlain departed to the corner of the room.

"Thank you very much"

Rio gave his gratitude with a smile.

If it was a normal case, the invited guest had no need to give their gratitude when given tea, if the guest were a noble, they wouldn't even think about expressing their gratitude.

But, it doesn't mean that Rio was different from the nobles, he decided to say his gratitude normally since he had no intention in behaving like a noble.

Incidentally, the matter about Rio being the benefactor of Liselotte had been conveyed to the people of this mansion, but they're not especially told regarding his social position.

Maybe because she wasn't quite used to receiving words of gratitude, the chamberlain was slightly startled and then bowed with a smile on her face.

He waited for slightly longer than 10 minutes after that.

Rio sensed people coming closer to the dining room.

The door of the dining room opened and then, several people came into the room.

What attracted his attention were the male and female in their prime who walked in the front, and then, Liselotte who was walking behind them.

Richard and Aria restrained their presence and followed further behind.

Maybe because she changed her clothes in such little time, Liselotte wore a simple white dress.

Standing from the sofa immediately, Rio bow down after straightening himself.

"Yoo, so you're Haruto-kun, Welcome in the royal capital villa of our Duke Kretia house. Welcome. I'm Liselotte's father, Cedric Kretia"

The male who walked on the front welcomed Rio with a cheerful tone that was pleasant to hear.

He was Liselotte father, Cedric Kretia duke.

Though his age was supposedly in the middle of his forties, he was a handsome man who could be called a young father for Liselotte.

"It's my first time meeting you. My name is Haruto. Much gratitude for inviting me to this mansion in this occasion"

Rio greeted him with his words and gestures full of courtesy.

Cedric let out a bright smile.

"I have heard the story you know. It seems that you saved Liselotte some time ago. My deepest gratitude for it. I hear that the life of my daughter would have been in great danger were you not in that place"

His words were friendly.

"As for that event, I just happened to be in the right place at the right time. Since I just beat the demons that came rushing at me"

Rio waved his hand while smiling wryly.

## Part 6

"Hahaha, it was still a fact that you saved my cute Liselotte you know. Listen to what I say. It seems that you're participating in this kingdom's Hero-sama's debut party. Feel free to relax yourself as if it was your home during your stay in the capital"

"Thank you very much"

Feeling such earnest gratitude coming from Cedric, Rio told his gratitude while bowing deeply.

Though it seems he already received an explanation about Rio beforehand, when the daughter of a great noble brings along a wanderer of unknown origin, there might not be many fathers who can show a nice attitude from the bottom of their heart.

It seems that somehow Cedric was a gentle person with a big heart.

Though should he say that as expected of a duke, Rio can feel the dignity hidden behind his friendly smile for his long service.

"Dear, I also want to convey my gratitude to Liselotte's benefactor. Please introduce me to him"

The woman who stood beside Cedric said that.

She was a beautiful and gentle woman with deep blue eyes and pale blue hair like Liselotte.

"Ah, Julianne. My bad"

Cedric replied with a bright smile and,

"Let me introduce her to you, Haruto-kun. She's Julianne, Liselotte's mother and also my wife"

He then turned towards Rio and introduced the woman called Julianne.

"Fufu, good day. I'm Julianne Kretia. Thank you very much for saving my daughter. I feel really grateful to you from the bottom of my heart"

Julianne who followed the introduction, greeted him courteously. It does appear that she's Liselotte mother.

Certainly, be it her hair color, eye color, or her calm and gentle features due to her well upbringing, everything is in Liselotte the more he look at her.

Though he didn't know of her age, as soon as he saw them, Julianne seemed so youthful that both mother and daughter would be taken as nothing but a pair of sisters no matter how one looked at them.

"It's the first time we meet. My name is Haruto. Though I'm ashamed for mistaking Julianne-sama as Liselotte-sama's older sister"

"Oh my, you're so skillful I see"

Julianne faced slightly down while blushing due to shyness.

"Hahaha, he's absolutely right. It's because Julianne is beautiful"

Cedric agreed with a good mood while wearing a bright smile that would dazzle everyone who saw him.

"Gezz, dear is such a tease....."

Julianne averted her face while placing her hands on her face.

That action perfectly matched the really sweet her.

Nevertheless, it might be because they were really close, this pair of husband and wife acted like a newlywed couple.

Part 7

"My deepest apologize Haruto-sama. They're always acting like this you know. Causing the people who see them to feel embarrassed, they're beyond intimate to the point that I can't even enter into their self created world"

Liselotte who was looking from the back of her parents told that to him while smiling wryly.

"I think that a relationship between a marriage couple going smoothly is a wonderful thing"

Rio replied truthfully with a smile.

"Oh, so you also think like that. You really are a youth with a promising future"



Cedric praised Rio with his nice, resounding tenor.

"I'm grateful for your praise"

Rio said so with a short bow.

Cedric looked intently at Rio's face and then,

"Fumu, well then, should we chat while have our dinner. First is taking our seat right. It's a family only banquet. So switch from the formal speech"

So he said.

"What do you wish as an aperitif ? I'm preparing from a low alcohol content to a high one"

When everyone sat, the chamberlains came and asked whether they want to drink the aperitif[\[3\]](#).

They also presented every aperitif.

"Thank you. Well then, may I take a wine based cocktail ? "

"Certainly. Please wait for a while"

After bowing lightly, the chamberlain left silently.

After that, the aperitif was carried along with the appetizer and then, the banquet to welcome Rio started.

Cedric skillfully guided the conversation, Julianne laughed pleasantly, in addition, a smile also floated on Liselotte and Rio's faces who were being lured by her.

Gradually, the liquor also lifted the atmosphere.

"Somehow, Liselotte's growing into a strong-willed child that is different from me or Julianne right?"

And then, Cedric suddenly started to tell him about Liselotte.

"D-Dear Father ? "

Liselotte wore an expression as if something unexpected happened.

Cedric grinned widely and then, opened his mouth while looking at Rio who sat in front of him.

"You can't disregard something like personal connections to live as a noble. I wonder if you understand that ? "

"Yeah, I have the knowledge about it"

Rio nodded slightly.

## Part 8

"A link between houses is the prime custom for forming that personal connection. In other words, it's a marriage. Marriage is for the sake of continuation of the house, forming personal connections, avoiding social events as a noble is a difficult thing. That's why the nobles do political marriages. They do marriage interviews for the sake of political marriage. Even if the said person isn't interested in the other party"

Cedric showed a slightly troubled smile as he said that.

"Liselotte also couldn't be exempted from that. Various formal marriage interviews are coming from some houses, including duke houses. In addition, they have come since her childhood.

Well, it's similar to meeting face to face. If I wanted to maintain a harmonious relationship with the noble society, doing something like rejecting everything would be a poor move. Since Liselotte is as you see, cute to the point of dazzling. That alone already made the talk about marriage come from lot of house. Of course since receiving every one of them is troublesome, we made it so that the formal marriage interview is to reject the ones with bad rumors amongst them" [Cedric]

When Rio sent a fleeting glance at Liselotte while listening to her father's story, her body was trembling while her face flushed red in embarrassment.

"It might be around her eighth year. Liselotte came and said this in my office. *'If I graduate by skipping grades till senior grade in the royal academy when I am still 12 years old, I'll have you willingly hear my wishes'* right. That wish was that she wanted me to accept her management of the municipal territory and let her establish a firm"

"D-dear father, telling that story now is....."[Liselotte]

Liselotte tried to change the subject with cramped smile on her face.

Maybe because Rio was in front of her, it seems that she didn't want to show her improper and stubborn actions.

"Oh my, isn't that okay. This is a good chance for Haruto-sama who's your benefactor to know that side of you" [Julianne]

Julianne restrained Liselotte as if enjoying this situation.

Even Liselotte was unable to maneuver further, so she sighed slightly in lamentation.

Cedric smiled as he confirmed the state of his beloved daughter and,

"At that time, Liselotte was barely 8 years old. It'll make anyone surprised when she suddenly says something like that right? So I asked for her reason. And then, what do you think she said at that time?" [Cedric]

He looked at Rio with a pleasant mood as he asked that question.

*"Dear father, I'm not of mind to partake in a political marriage with someone who I don't wish for. I want the other party who will marry myself to be chosen by myself. That's why I want power to at least decide my own marriage. That's my reason".* She said that with a strangely ghastly expression floating on her face. She was only 8 years old you know?" [Cedric]

A moment later, Cedric answered his own question as if unable to endure his own laugh.

"Maybe she's strong willed despite being our own child, or it's just her good trait, whichever it is, I'm deeply moved. I readily consented to her wish. And then, this child fulfilled her promise. In just two and a half years you see" [Cedric]

"She's a wonderful Ojousama isn't she"

Rio was smiling lightly while saying that.

"So you understand? She's an extremely cute and excellent daughter to the point that she's wasted on us" [TL : You might be already noticing this but let me say it : Cedric is a doting father!!!]

## Part 9

A really proud expression floated on Cedric's face.

But, an expression of grief immediately peeked through that.

"That's why it's normal for us to feel anxious for her when asked to live in separated place but, you see. Didn't a flock of demons march towards Almond just the other day. Though there's a rumor that the origin of the agitated demons is because of a dragon. Well, the dragon itself is something like a natural calamity. Though it not be helped for the sake of quickening the growth of my daughter....."

Cedric talking as if feeling slightly disheartened.

After a short lament as it is, he straightened himself and then faced Rio.

"You're a man who possesses an uncommon swordsmanship right? I heard that you're a reliable person from Liselotte you know?"

"Those words are more than what I deserved"

Rio replied while bowing lightly.

"Is that a slight precaution ? I don't mean to threaten you at all. If it's precaution, your worry is wasted. But, I have a little wish you see"

"A wish ? "

He didn't mean that as precaution at all, Rio decided to hear it even if it's just talk.

"It could be something related to work or essential for position, though there are many people who think kindly of this child, there are a similar amount of people who hate and envy her. If it's okay with you, will you become her friend after this ? "

".....Eh. That's a certainty but, is this the matter that you wish for ? "

After a short while, Rio asked for the slightly anticlimactic situation.

For his expectation, the content of his wish which he thought was coming was something slightly deeper. [TL : Like marriage]

"Ah, is that so"

Cedric was showing a brilliant smile.

Rio blinked once with—— a “twink”.

"Certainly. Since I also wishing for an everlasting relationship after this, please treat me well then"

Rio declared that while smiling lightly at Cedric.

[1] [Ed: 110 knots is 203 km per hour.]

[2] [TL : Harbor———Noble district———Royal castle]

[3] [TL\* : This aperitif things is so confusing—][Ed: Well, alcohol seems to be a noble thing as Celia has said, so instead of nachos, nobles drink a cup of alcohol with their appetite?][TL : Well tea for meal is perfect to me]

# Chapter 89: That's Like A Curse

## Part 1

The night before Rio goes to the evening party.

All the people of the capital already fell asleep in the middle of night.

Several days have passed since he's staying in the capital of Galwark kingdom, after finally being used to the life in the inn, they can take the tension bit by bit.

Lying with her back on the bed which she still haven't gotten used to, it's about time for Miharuru and co who's staying in the inn of the capital to sleep too — —、 Ayase Miharuru saw a dream.

A boy and a girl whose face she remembers is facing each other in the sephia colored scene.

It's natural that she has the recollection of them.

Since those two are childhoodfriends, the girl is Miharuru herself.

Though it's inside her dream, her head is strangely calm, even her consciousness is clear.

Miharuru's looking from the side at the figure of the boy who's her childhood friend and the very young version of herself.

*"There's no doubt about it".*

The dream that she's seeing now is the replaying of her past experience.

That was a certain day in the summer.

The brilliant light of sunlight is pouring down incessantly — —、 That day was a bittersweet incident for her.

Is what she feels.

She in those days is a crybaby and weak-minded, she was naturally following around on the side of the boy who is her childhood friend.

She's extremely shy towards strangers, at those times, it seems she didn't even have a friend except for that boy.

That's why it was natural.

After her childhood friend vanished in front of her, Miharuru of that time is crying non-stop.

The Miharuru of her dream frantically embraced her childhood friend while weeping.

In contrast to her younger-self who's crying non-stop, her crying childhood friend is cheering Miharuru to be firm.

When she thinks back about it, her childhood friend was always by her side, always gentle, and protecting Miharuru more than anyone.

"Let's marry when we meet again ! "

Her childhood friend said that resolutely to Miharuru who's crying non-stop no matter what he does.

Definitely, after we meet again.

The young Miharuru's looking blankly at her childhood friend.

Even Miharuru who's looking at them from the side becomes slightly embarrassed, she was looking at them with her face facing down due to embarrassment from the corner of the road.

".....Do it. Let's Do it. We'll marry ! "

The young Miharuru in the middle of her cry is replying to him while showing a nothing but brilliant smile.

She makes up her mind on parting whether she'll go as far as kissing her childhood friend.

Her current self might be able to do that. Unexpectedly, her current self might be a bold woman.

When she thought of that, she became slightly embarrassed again. Though it's inside her dream, she feels that her cheeks turned red.

The dream is moving forward in that way, the young Miharuru became silent as

she's looking at her childhood friend who left with the car.

The young Miharū's frantically waving her arms toward the car that was leaving at the distance.

There's no happiness as great as this day in Miharū life. And then, there's also no greater sorrow than this day. [TL : Is she really a child?]

But, after this day, Miharū swore to herself that she'll become stronger and more positive.

And then, Miharū's doing her best to become a great bride.

She believes that he'll come to pick her someday— —

(EH ? )

The scenery in front of Miharū rapidly changing like when she's changing a television program.



## Part 2

Her eyes slowly opened wide at the scenery that's spreading in front of her.

In front of her was the figure of her childhood friend.

The scenery keeps changing as if completely being digested.

But, the scenery became a place that's completely unknown to Miharu, and she's on the side of a boy unknown to her.

In the middle of the ever-changing scene, the boy is for some reason tackling in various kind of things with his utmost effort.

Study, helping the housework, helping the agricultural work and, martial arts, the boy was single-mindedly doing his best.

That figure of him is charming, Miharu's unconsciously rooting for the boy inside her dream.

The boy's growing bit-by-bit.

It seems that the reason for the boy putting his best is to meet with Miharu.

"Let's marry when we meet again ! "

That words don't even have a binding power, it was a light and fleeting promise.

How becomes the future of the boy and the girl who exchanged the promise is something that's unknown——

Normally, they might forget about such a promise along with their growth, maybe they're not even thinking about protecting such a promise.

But, the boy inside of her dream was putting his best effort to accomplish that promise just by simple honesty.

Everything is for the sake of Miharu——

Even if it's just the wishes of her made inside of her dream, she was truly glad about it.

Perhaps, the real him also put this kind of effort.

Her cheeks loosened and she's unintentionally blushing while thinking about that.

But, if it's the truth, she might be able to be reunited with that boy again.

*"I'm not on earth right now, I'm sent to a far distant world——"*

Miharu's recalled indescribable memories.

While she thinks about it, the scenery changed again.

Before she knew, the boy now has grown to the same age as Miharu.

(As I thought, maybe he's popular amongst the girls.....)

The boy in the dream is growing into an extremely good-looking youth.

There's some trace left of his younger self, she thought that he might really be growing into this youth.

To her surprise, the boy seemingly entering the same high school as Miharu.

(Though I'm really glad if it's the truth. Commuting to the high school together.....)

If, if he's entering the same class of the same high school, at that time there was so many things she wants to tell him.

But, reality is not so sweet, for once, the boy didn't enroll in the same class as Miharu.

Miharu came to this world practically right after the first day of the school.

She still has yet to become closer with her classmates, there's no one who can be said as her friend except those who goes to the same middle school as her, still, she expected that she'll recognize him if they're entering the same class.

(The incident just a few months ago right)

That's right, not even several months have passed since Miharu and co came to this world.

Though it was a blink of times, Miharu feels that the time she had here was extremely packed.

If time passed as usual in earth, it might be about the time for summer

holiday.

( Can I..... Return ? )

## Part 3

Miharu shakes her head in denial as if denying the anxiety that she can't see before.

She's concentrating at the scene in front of her.

Somehow the boy is splendidly passing into the same school as Miharu, and was coming to the entrance ceremony.

Though she doesn't even go there for several days, this place is definitely the high school where Miharu's going to.

The boy's moving his line of sight at the notice board installed at the yard of the school and find his own class.

Suddenly, his line of sight fixed at a certain place.

*(Ah, maybe he found my class)*

Despite inside her dream, it really was a happiness if they was in the same class.

Miharu's slowly stopping by the side of the boy while her heart beating loudly, she seen the name writted in front of his line of sight.

*(Eh..... My name ? )*

Somehow, it seems that boy line of sight stopped at her name.

She's sure of it since she's enrolling in the first class, it's not strange thing for the boy to find her name before him.

The boy eyes is fixed on Miharu name.

A gentle smile formed on his lips.

After that, he found his own class and then looking around restlessly at the surrounding. He might be trying to look for Miharu.

But, there's so many people since it's the entrance ceremony, the boy reluctantly left that place.

*(Uhm, this day, Takahisa-kun and Masato-kun overslept, so we're a bit late*

when going to school..... )

If this is based on reality, she might be barely arriving just before the start of the entrance ceremony.

Miharu and the three Sendou—— Takahisa, Aki and, Masato was going to school together like usual.

Though at first she's going with Aki to the primary school, Masato and Takahisa, the child of the second husband of Aki's mother is tagging along in the middle, so it became their custom.

Since it's a dream after all, definitely not real, though everything will be perfect if she comes at the same time——, This dream is strangely not flexible.

Miharu unintentionally let out a wry smile.

And then, the entrance ceremony began.

In that place, Sumeragi Satsuki, her senpai since middle school era is welcoming the new students.

Satsuki is working as the student council president of the school, she was the face of the whole students.

With her talent and beauty, be it studies or sport, she's always getting the top result, she's basking in the attention as the object of admiraiton from the surrounding students.

(As expected of Satsuki-san)

The freshmen, all of them regardless their gender are looking with envious look toward Satsuki.

Though her appearance is that of beauty, dignified and, she has the brilliance which will unintentionally attract people regardless their gender.

Maybe the boys were also fascinated by her.

Thinking so, Miharu's timidly looking toward the boy.

But, he's somehow paying attention to Miharu's class, Satsuki greeting seemingly unregistered into his ears.

He's not even looking at Satsuki who does her speech.

Though she can't speak, she's happy, Miharu unintentionally became amused.

After that, he also ignored the slightly boring headmaster speech, Miharu decided to look at the profile of the boy.

## Part 4

The entrance ceremony has ended, when the slightly prolonged homeroom finally finished, the boy immediately headed towards Miharū classroom.

Though he was invited to go to karaoke by the mixed group of boys and girls who sat on his side when he was about to leave, he's courteously refusing their invitation.

When he makes a stop in front of Miharū's class, maybe because he's nervous, the boy's was taking a slightly deep breath.

(Do your best ! )

Miharū cheered at the boy in her mind as she stands by his side.

The her in her dream will be slightly happy by reuniting with the boy again.

Miharū who saw from his side was slightly nervous too.

Though it seems that Miharū's class already finished their homeroom too, majority of the students are still in the class, the sound of their conversation is loudly resounding till the corridor.

He's timidly looking at the situation inside the classroom from door of the classroom that's left open.

Though he was looking at the classroom restlessly, his gaze fixed after he find his target.

(Ah, no. I.....)

The one who sat at that place was definitely Miharū.

Miharū's sitting there as she's absentmindedly looking ahead, maybe thinking about something.

(Uuh, I become cheerful)

Several groups which already formed is in the middle of conversation, a blank area made in the surrounding of Miharū.

Her strong characteristic of shyness isn't that much different with the past.

The thing about talking with someone she just met isn't her strong point and made her very nervous.

Though she's not that nervous to start the conversation from her side if the other party is a girl, when the other party is a boy, she's often troubled and at a loss for words to address the other party, of course it's the same for conversation.

The childhood friend of the boy was frequently teased by male students after he transferred, maybe the cause of her being aware that she's not good at talking to the opposite sex is when she's being addressed by overly-familiar men while walking in the middle of the city after coming to this world.

One of the reason why she might not have that much immunity in talking to the opposite sex is because she talks to nothing but Masato and Takahisa, the younger brother-in-law and brother-in-law of Aki after middle school era.

Though that chance to get used to men have increased when she's spending her time together with Aki, who's like her own little sister, the younger Masato aside, there's a particular detail which made her somehow aware a bit of it the first time she met Takahisa.

(Which remind me, I didn't feel that nervous when I'm talking to Haruto-san huh.....)

Though there's the emergency case the first time they meet, she didn't feel nervous when they're having conversation with just the two of them during daily life after that.

Though that may be because she was unconsciously piling up the image of Rio and Haruto in her mind——

"I'm sorry. That girl name is Ayase Miharu-san right ? "

The boy asked female students who was chatting near the entrance of the classroom.

"EH? ..... A, Yeah, uhm it might be so. Ah, will you wait for a while, I'll confirm from the list of the name ? "



## Part 5

The called female students answered the boy with slightly amazed face.

Just like that, she's confirming the seating chart that have the name of the student on the teacher desk. The female student who was left is asking the name and the class of the boy with a really interested face.

"I'm back ! Sorry for the waiting. Well, shall we goes back then. Let's meet with Aki and Masato. Oops..... Mail is coming from Satsuki-san"

Thereupon, one boy is coming and calling to Miharu in a friendly manner.

His name is Sendou Takahisa, the brother-in-law of Aki.

When Takahisa entered the classroom, the female students become slightly excited.

The tall and handsome Takahisa has this sociable atmosphere.

That's why it's maybe natural for him to be marked by the female students even in the first day of the school.

"Aah, maybe they really are going out after all. That girl and Sendou-kun"

"They're a match of handsome and beauty right"

"But I'm really jealous of them enrolling in the same school as a lover ! "

So and so, the female students have spreading cunning gossip.

Looking at the scene, the boy having a slightly astonished face.

(Eh, AH.....)

Miharu turned pale as she has this unpleasant premonition.

Certainly, they look like pair of lovers when seeing their exchange just now.

Though they've promised to return together with Aki and Masato since it's the entrance ceremony.

Maybe the boy just misunderstood it.

Thereupon, in that place,

"That girl is Ayase-san"

The girl who confirming the seating chart and name list returned and told that to the boy.

"..... Is that so. Thank you very much"

The boy is telling his gratitude with a slightly awkward smile.

Turning his heel as it is and then, the boy was leaving just one step away from the classroom where Miharu was.

(Y-You're misunderstanding ! S-Stop ! )

Though the panicked Miharu's trying to stop him, her voice won't come out.

Even when she thinks that it's possible within this dream, she can't interfere with the character in this setting.

Since he tried to leave just after asking that, though the female students that was in that place also tried to stop him, the boy just left after saying "My apologies. I'm in a hurry".

(That's a misunderstanding. It's just a misunderstanding you know. Hey, please ! Please stop ! )

The boy isn't stopping his gait despite her plea.

The boy showed an expression as if biting on a bitter bug.

Miharu recalling the tightening feeling on her heart seeing that profile of him.

Thereupon, the scene of the dream changed again.

The current stage was the appartement where the boy is living.

Maybe because he is just moving in, the boy was just lying on his bed while looking at the ceiling with vacant eyes in the room where you can feel someone-living-in.

He's in this state since sometime ago.

What might he be thinking about.

Everything is unreadable from his absolutely expressionless face.

## Part 6

Miharu was looking at that boy's situation with a unbearable feeling.

But, maybe because this is in her dream, Miharu forgot about a severe fact. That's is, despite urging him to approach her at once, he's been lying in waiting for several days——

How many times I wonder.

The place was changing rapidly.

Just how many days have been passing by.

The boy is having this refreshing expression on his face more than the time when he saw Miharu sometime ago. As if he already made his decision——

It seems that now he's commuting to the high-school.

The boy is walking toward the school wearing a new school uniform.

Without even stopping after arriving in the school, the boy immediately goes to Miharu's classroom.

And then he's looking around the classroom restlessly.

But, it seems that somehow Miharu isn't coming yet.

After sighing slightly, the boy returned to the classroom.

The scene's changing just like that. Now was the lunch break. Though the boy's visiting the classroom again expecting to meet Miharu, as expected, there's no Miharu.

And then, the setting changing again for several times, in the repeating scene for several times, the boy heard from the student in the class that Miharu have absent from the school.

It seems there's not even any kind of contact relating to her absent.

Hearing that, the boy looks slightly anxious.

(Could it be——)

Miharu's face cramped as she has an unpleasant premonition.

(This dream is telling me the story after I lost.....)

Miharu's assailed by a freezing-like sensation on her spine.

If that's the case— —

She's scared imagining on what happens later.

No.

I don't want to see.

I don't want to see anymore of this.

Seeing this is scary.

But, the dream just mercilessly keeps moving forward.

In a certain day, one part of students including Miharu disappeared, that fact is clarified to the students later.

From the fact that Satsuki was amongst them, since considerable amount of rumors was already running rampant inside of the school, even the school side judged that they can't hide this fact anymore.

The boy by this point of day almost lost all of his smile.

Though there's a rumor running rampant in the school that Miharu and co doing whatever they want is the reason they're absconding the school, the students also lost their interest immediately.

Nothing can be done by the high-school boy but to look for her whereabouts, everyday have passed by like that as he's worrying endlessly without any outlet.

Miharu can't even turn her face away from that scene, she just looked at the boy who's slowly changed by days.

Maybe it's much better as a comfort if he's enjoying a happy life after the matter of Miharu absconding.

Though it's painful to look at him become intimate with the other girls and to just forget her, it's even more painful see him keep living while chained by her.

(Is this still gonna continue..... ? )

The boy inside her dream—— No, the youth has entered in university of Tokyo.

Somehow, this dream hasn't ended yet.

Just how long is this dream. This dream which is just like the summarized version of his entire life in digest version——

## Part 7

No one by his side.

Though the youth have received confessions from the girls several times, he keeps rejecting all of them.

Living alone, working part-time, though it seems that he's spending a fulfilling university life, the youth's spending his life as if keeping his distance with others.

Even so, he's helping elderly who is troubled on roadside, helping little girl who's weeping since she missed her bus stop, his kind nature is in there, Miharu's somehow driven by a helpless feeling every time she sees him like that.

It's okay even if she can't talk properly to him. It's okay even if you've not noticed herself. Despite this is in her own dream, and yet, it's painful to be on his side.

Miharu resolved herself and decided to look at the way of life of the youth.

Unchanging days keep going on.

She feels this is a truly unreasonably absurd long dream.

The fact that this was a sorrowful story.

The story of him just living aimlessly of whatever agony, despair and frustration is dwelling in him. [TL : Help—挫折して、絶望して、苦悩して、何の当てもなくただ生き続けるだけの話。]

[Alt : A story about continuing to live aimlessly, in frustration, despair, and agony. ]

She wishes that at least it'll turn into a happy end.

Without herself. She wishes for the end in the future to give a hint of happiness with the youth tied to someone.

But, Miharu's wish didn't come true.

(A..... A, AAAAH.....)

The bus where the youth got on met an accident.

The youth died with seemingly a face full of regret.

An instant death—— It was a scenery which made her think of absolutely nothing.

The youth already not retaining his original feature on the place where he sat.

One part of the bus that toppled became dyed red with blood.

(N-No..... NO-NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOooooooo ! )

Miharu's screaming in her dream.

"!!!!!! "

Thus she woke up.

"Ha, ha, Ha, haa....."

At the same time as she opens her eyes, Miharu heart throbbing loudly, she became slightly hyperventilating.

Her heart's beating loudly as if it's about to burst, her pajamas drenched with her sweat.

Her whole body felt cold as if she isn't a living being.

Her body is trembling non stop.

Miharu's raising half of her body and pulling the quilt, she was looking intently into the darkness.

"It's a dream..... Right"

She muttered in a low voice.

*Yeah, it's a dream. This is a dream.*

*Definitely a dream.*

*Otherwise, he's beyond redemption.*

*That ——*

*That is, as if——*

(Maybe it's because of me..... If I stopped crying, he won't make that kind of promise.....)

Something like a promise during childhood will weather away along with their growth.

Maybe he's a fool or an abnormal human For him to single-mindedly try to fulfill that promise.



## Part 8

But, both Miharuru and the boy was growing properly because of that kind of sweet promise as their foundation.

Miharuru kept waiting for the boy, the boy always chasing after Miharuru, he keeps chasing after his shadow even after Miharuru disappeared——

Maybe, that promise was a curse for the boy.

That time, if Miharuru stopped crying, it'll end with a beautiful separation, and the boy didn't start talking about that promise.

In that case, the boy didn't need to live a life tied by that promise.

Miharuru thought so.

Right, to the point of making him die an agonizing death——

"Maybe because I'm selfishly saying that....."

As she says those words, Miharuru burst into tears.

She knows that it's just a dream.

But, despite it being just a dream——

If that event really happens——

As if suffered from Paranoia, the end of the youth etched deeply into her mind.

"..... Who ? "

The sound of clothes ruffling immediately resounding by her side, Miharuru reflexively asked that person's identity facing the darkness.

As she was certain that person facing in her direction——

"Miharuru"

"Ai.....-Chan ? Do you need something ? "

As a result, standing on that place was Aisia.

Maybe because she wears a black one piece, Aisia's presence became even thinner than usual under the cover of darkness.

Aisia suddenly approached and then brushed her hand on Miharuru's cheek. Her hand felt cold as if lacking the feeling of life.

But why now.

Miharuru is somehow feeling slightly warm in her chest.

She is immediately assailed by the comfortable feeling of drowsiness and she was rapidly losing her consciousness.

"Good night. Miharuru"

As if to give her a nice dream now——

Aisia muttered in her ears as Miharuru had peacefully fallen asleep.

# Chapter 90: Encounter

## Part 1

On the day of the evening party which served as Satsuki's debut.

While having to accompany Liselotte tonight, Rio was finally heading towards Galwark Kingdom's royal castle.

With the time steadily approaching evening, the full moon had already risen in the cloudless east sky.

Two extremely well made coaches stood by the garden of Duke Kretia's mansion.

Rio and Liselotte were going to take one while Cedric and Julianne were going inside the other one.

"Well then, I'll leave escorting our daughter to you then, Haruto-kun. Anyhow, it's the first time for this child to attend an evening party with someone of the opposite sex"

Cedric told Rio about that with a bright smile on his face before taking his coach.

Though it doesn't mean that she's never gone with men, it's more or less a tradition that when going to an evening party, the one who attends with someone of the opposite sex will become their partner for the night.

Though unmarried people can attend with their parents, a noble going with a partner near their age has happened with increasing frequency.

The pair is normally an unmarried man and woman who have the same level of status.

In short, they wore similar clothes and gems.

Especially in case of the male side, someone who attends without bringing a partner, even if they were an adult, will be treated as less than one.

A noble attending an evening party puts importance in dignity and honor; it's

easy to see that choosing a partner holds a very important meaning.

By the way, in a case of fiancée aside, the pairs who attend together are not obligated to remain together throughout the night, they can move separately depending on the situation and their judgement.

"Understood. While being an unworthy one, I'll do my best to not bring shame as the one who sits next to ojou-sama\*" [TL\* : Princess][Ed: Isn't it "Young Lady"]

Rio answered with a humble smile.

Liselotte is a duke's daughter; she even has the title of CEO of Rikka firm which is famous in the neighboring countries.

Moreover, didn't he just say that she has basically never attended an evening party together with someone unrelated by blood and of the opposite sex?

Honestly, it feels quite awkward for Rio to attend an evening party along with Liselotte.

If Rio who is nothing more than a nameless existence attends the evening party with her, a future of gathering attention from the nobles who attend the evening party is guaranteed.

(But it is necessary. It can't be helped)

Rio lamented a bit inside as reasoned his situation.

It's not anything bad in particular.

The main reason to have him tagging along with Liselotte is to make it easier for him to get in a contact with Satsuki, the hero, in the evening party.

"I'm glad that you say that. You-know-what, if it's Haruto-kun, you won't give an unfavorable impression when standing by Liselotte's side. It might be a nice coincidence if they treated you as her fiancée"

Cedric told him that with a teasing smile.

Julianne who stood by his side also smiled with an amused face.

"Haha....."

Rio's reply was a wry smile.

## Part 2

"It's okay, there's no need to take to heart what dear father just said, Haruto-kun. Since he usually jokes around with it"

Liselotte said that while looking slightly shocked at Cedric's direction.

"Hahaha, that's harsh. I'm just really worried about my cute daughter"

Cedric slightly shrugged his shoulders while saying that with a slightly joking tone.

"Even if it is a joke, please keep it at a moderate level. Geez"

"It was the first male brought home by my daughter after all. So I just can't hold back my curiosity"

"Geez, please don't make me more embarrassed. My apologies for making you wait. Haruto-sama"

After sighing lightly, Liselotte turned around and apologized to Rio.

"No, it's not a problem at all"

Rio shook his head in denial as he smiled gently at her.

"Thank you very much. Well, then. Please feel free to enter the coach. My companion"

"Yeah, acknowledged"

Rio's nodding in agreement.

While at it he also nodded to Cedric and Julianne, Rio got on the splendidly made coach which was standing in the garden along with Liselotte.

Thus, accordingly.

"Please enjoy today to the fullest with both of you. It's a long awaited chance right"

So, Cedric gently said that to the two inside of the coach.

"Thank you very much"

"Yes. Dear father"

After getting on the coach, Rio and Liselotte replied with a smile on their face, each with with different meaning on them.

Rio's smile was one full of goodwill, and Liselotte's felt like a 'it can't be helped then' smile.

Both of them were in the fancy coach.

In the meantime, Aria, the retainer who served as the guard and driver, was already getting on the coach.

The scenery of the round moon rising in the eastern sky was being projected from outside the windows.

"Well then, we'll depart"

After the driver said that, the coach in which Rio and Liselotte were in started to move towards the royal castle.

There was no other coach heading towards the royal castle in their vicinity, the "garagara" sound of the wheels resounded inside the silent noble district.

It seems that the castle gate wasn't jammed with the coaches of all the nobles since they already decided on time slots of attendance by their noble rank.

Everyone of Duke Kretia's house, who had the highest family status in the kingdom, entered the venue slightly behind the schedule, moreover, everyone entered with a companion, even Rio who was attending as Liselotte's guest.

"Haruto-sama matches very well with the tail coat don't you. It completely brings out your charm you know. Is it brand new from the store? "

Liselotte asked that question while the coach advanced along the way.

### **Part 3**

"Yeah, I'm not that familiar with this sort of clothes. I got help from my acquaintance"

"Is that so. That person must have an awfully good fashion sense. Though many nobles prefer gaudy color, my preference is settled down to black"

"My apologize that there's nothing but trifle language which comes to mind but, Liselotte-sama looks very beautiful today"

Rio also praised Liselotte while secretly showing a sign of embarrassment.

Currently, Liselotte was wearing a beautiful dress which accentuated her beauty.

Her long light blue hair which would extend till her back was styled with an upward style, a wild rose shaped hair brooch was used to tie her hair, a pale light blue dress which matched her hair color, a big ribbon which made one think that it's a wild rose similarly fastened on the back.

Her skirt gently fluttered just reaching the ground, bringing about a fairy-like charm.

The eyes of the men will definitely be glued to her when she enters the party venue.

"Well....., Thank you very much"

Liselotte looked at Rio's face with slight astonishment, she gently said her gratitude with a slightly shy face.

As far as she was concerned, it's not an unusual thing to be praised for her appearance.

She was used to being called such things as "Pretty", "Beautiful", "Lovely" or sometimes even some long winded praises from the male nobles that she has met up till then.

Though most of those were just a pick up line which was thrown along with a gaze filled with passion and lust, the current Rio was a true gentleman, she really couldn't feel any kind of ulterior motive. [TL : He might be impotent right] [Ed: a likely theory]

On the other hand, it didn't seem like a compliment with simple flattery, Liselotte was strangely happy being praised purely for her own appearance.

At that time, their coach stopped moving.

"We have arrived at the castle gate. Now the driver will be going through the procedure to enter"

Aria's voice resounding inside from her place at the driver's seat.

It seems that even the defense of the castle became even more strict this night, from the windows which they kept open, they could see the figure of soldiers patrolling around.

"You're of Duke Kretia's house, right? Certainly, I have confirmed it. Please follow the road"

The humble voice of a soldier slightly resounded from the outside.

The sound of the opening of the gate was immediately heard, the coach started to move again.

Just like that, Rio entered the center of Galwark Kingdom's royal castle.



There was a small castle for social gatherings built next to the royal castle— And now, this facility became the venue for Satsuki's debut and the evening party, every part of the small castle was decorated with yellow ornaments on the base of the pale indigo walls.

They did not directly enter the venue upon arrival, Rio was guided towards the waiting room along with everyone of Duke Kretia's house.

There was a strict protocol even with the rotation of attendance, it was decided that they would wait till their sequential order comes.

Splendid furniture was lined up inside, and the walls were decorated with works of arts.

Rio started a conversation with Cedric and the others inside this kind of room.

#### **Part 4**

"I heard that the evening party will be held throughout several days"

"Yeah, the political balance of the Bertram kingdom in the west is unstable, what kind of reckless things do they think when they are always glaring at the Proxia Empire in the north"

Cedric replied with a wry smile.

"I do think that everyone needs some good news for times such as this. Even your morale will go down if there are only gloomy news all the time right?"



Rio said with a friendly smile.

"That's right. Basically the debut of Hero-dono is also to raise the morale of the citizens, though it won't just end that simply for the nobles who attend the evening party. The various complex situations around are becoming even more complicated"

"Though it should have some meaning in line with the true goal of the party which will result in a wait and see kind of situation that causes the nobles to restrain each other, right ? "

Thinking that it is not his place to talk about such a situation, Rio stated his own opinion while dodging the root question.

"Hou....."

Cedric took a breath demonstrating interest in his opinion.

He could see the point in Rio's remark just then.

Just like that, Cedric opened his mouth and looked at Rio.

"I wonder how much you know about our country, Haruto-kun ? "

"Unfortunately it's nothing but rumors on the street, some of which include the relationship with the neighboring country"

Rio shook his head softly with a wry smile.

Actually, Rio knew nothing but the superficial rumors regarding Galwark Kingdom.

"I see. As I thought, you seem like a wise person. But somehow, I now know the reason why Liselotte set her eyes on you"

After looking at Rio's face with slightly squinted eyes, Cedric laughed.

"You are overestimating me. I'm stating nothing but things anyone else could see"

"You might say that, you see. But, I won't say so. Not to mention a mere citizen, I think even most nobles of the kingdom wouldn't understand your words. The ones that could are a minority."

Cedric told his words with subtle hidden meaning.

Rio was slightly troubled, not understanding what was so good about his answer, the moment he wanted to ask the sound of someone knocking on the door resounded inside the room.

"Oops, it's time. I thought that it was still early though"

Saying that, Cedric looked at the door with slight surprised.

"Excuse me. Your excellency Duke Kretia"

In there, the door was politely opened along with a voice slightly flustered voice

The soldier guarding the front of the room entered right away.

## **Part 5**

"The Hero-sama of Bertram kingdom mentioned that he must definitely give his greetings to Liselotte-sama..... He's coming with the daughter of Duke Fontine, Roana and her highness Princess Flora....."

And told them that with a troubled expression.

The ones waiting inside the room opened their eyes slightly in surprise.

"Ah, I see. Since they're going to the extent of coming to greet us, we can't just send them away. No problem. It'll also do as a warmup"

"HA ! "

Thereupon after bowing with a practiced movement, the soldier left the room to invite the three who were waiting outside.

"Yo, Liselotte"

The counter revolution army of Bertram kingdom—— Though it was now called the revolution army—— Under the banner of the summoned hero, Sakata Hiroaki, who merrily greeted Liselotte once he saw her after entering the room.

Since they were going to attend the evening party, he was wearing a splendid white tailcoat with golden ornaments.

Foreign country nobles were invited to the evening party, Hiroaki was also included.

Though, it was natural considering that Hiroaki and co had been staying as foreign guests in Galwark kingdom's capital for around one month.

By the way, Duke Euguno has been visiting the territories of Marquis Rodan, their base in the Bertram kingdom.

Though it was a slightly over-familiar greeting, everyone of Duke Kretia house showed undisturbed smiles to Hiroaki.

"It's been a while. Hiroaki-sama. I'm really grateful that you came here to greet me"

Liselotte who was called as the representative returned his greeting with a wide smile on her face.

"Yeah, I heard about it. It seems that Almond was in great danger. Though I heard that it was safe now, I was worried since we couldn't go there since the incident"

"My deepest apologize. As the prefectural governor, I can't leave Almond so easily due to the post processing of the event"

"What, so that's the reason, well..... Since I could see you safe and sound like this. I think it's already good enough with that"

"Fufu, Hiroaki-sama's as kind as usual aren't you"

Liselotte gave her gratitude with a smile that will likely unintentionally charm those of the opposite sex.

Hiroaki became entranced and stared intently at her who wore a new dress for the first time.

Hiroaki unintentionally had his face flushing red in front of the beautiful appearance of Liselotte who had a dress that was much more fashionable than the previous time.

"Ehm, nevertheless, doesn't that dress match you very well"

Hiroaki praised Liselotte with a slightly embarrassed voice after fixing his tone a bit.

Though he glanced at Liselotte from time to time, maybe because he was

aware of his own behavior, he avoided meeting her eyes.

"Thank you very much. This is my favorite dress"

"O~h, I see. I think, it's beautiful"

"Fufu, you're skillful with your flattery aren't you"

## **Part 6**

Though Hiroaki was immersed in his conversation while forgetting the people in their surroundings, after chuckling, Liselotte moved her line of sight to Flora and Roana.

"Your highness Princess Flora. It is my honor to meet you again"

Liselotte gave a respectful greeting by raising the cuff of her skirt with both hands.

"Yes. It's been a while. My deepest apology for intruding during this pleasant time with your family"

Flora apologized with a humble smile.

She was wearing a violet dress, her long light purple hair was bundled in a half-upward style.

Her figure was cute to the point of not being inferior to Liselotte.

"It is not something for you to apologize. We'll always give a warm welcome if Flora-sama visits"

"It is my happiness for you to give those words"

Flora's smile showed her relief.

After that, Liselotte shifted her line of sight to Roana who was waiting behind Flora and Hiroaki.

"It's been a while too, Roana-sama"

"Yeah, it's been a while. I'm truly grateful for the invitation to your mansion the other day"

Roana bowed gracefully while raising the cuffs of her yellow dress.

"No, I'm glad that you spent a wonderful time"

Liselotte also bowed gracefully while raising the cuff of her dress.

"While I'm a bit late with it, I'll introduce the people on my side who have accompanied me today. First, this is my father, Cedric, and the woman by his side is my mother, Julianne"

Liselotte introduced only her parents, Julianne and Cedric for the time being.

"It is my first time to meet you all. I am called Cedric Kretia, Liselotte's father"

"Julianne, his wife. I am glad to meet you. It is my honor to be able to meet you"

Cedric and Julianne performed a brief introduction with gentle smiles on their faces.

"It is my first time to meet you. I'm Flora Bertram. It is a pleasure"

"I'm Roana Fontine. Please treat me well after this"

Flora and Roana greeted them back with lady-like manners.

"Yah, ehm, I'm Hiroaki Sakata. Pleased to meet you"

Looking at the two doing their greeting, Hiroaki bowed while trembling slightly from nervousness.

Maybe because he guessed the atmosphere of the place, he became meek which was somehow hard to imagine from his usual outspoken attitude.

He became as meek as a lamb.

"Hahaha, please no need to be so nervous. Hiroaki-dono"

## **Part 7**

So, Cedric addressed Hiroaki.

"Uhm, sorry for troubling you then. I'm really weak in using formal language. I..... just recently received a warning regarding my speech from Flora and Roana"

Hiroaki bowed lightly with an awkward smile on his face.

Flora on his side showed a troubled smile while Roana sighed lightly.

"I've heard that Hero-sama came from a different world. You are still

unfamiliar with this one's costumes, right? Now is a good chance to adapt to the living style of this world"

"Aah, Yes. I am saved when you say that"

Hiroaki scratched his head while saying that.

The introduction hadn't ended yet, Flora and co line of sight came upon Rio.

"He is Haruto-sama, my benefactor. I am inviting him in this occasion to repay his kindness"

And then, Liselotte introduced Rio.

Rio splendidly hid his surprise deep in his heart by showing an insincere smile on his face.

Despite not expecting that he would meet his old acquaintances in this way, he couldn't play it poorly and blow his cover.

"I am glad to meet you. Following the previous introductions. My name is Haruto. It is my honor to be able to meet everyone"

Gently placing his right hand on his chest, Rio expressed himself in a correct manner.

Though Roana squinted her eyes at the fact that he didn't give his family name, should time and circumstances permit it, it does not mean that a noble can't hide their family name.

Though in this case she isn't considering the situation of whether Rio is actually a noble, Roana guessed that he was a noble from his conduct and courteous speech.

"What kind of benefactor is he ? "

Hiroaki threw a sharp question.

"Hiroaki-sama knows of Almond's incident the other day right? I borrowed his power during that occasion"

Liselotte answered, as if slightly dodging the question.

"Hee"

Hiroaki's looked at Rio as if measuring him one way or another.

Rio caught his gaze with a smile.

"Nice to meet you. I'm Hiroaki Sakata. Tentatively, I'm a hero. Your age might be slightly younger than me. As I'm 19 years old"

"It is a pleasure to meet you. Hiroaki-sama. I am 16 years old"

"Well, you're at the same age as Roana then. Flora is one year younger"

Saying so, Hiroaki sent a fleeting glance at Flora and Roana.

"N? What's the matter, Flora ? "

## **Part 8**

For some reason, Flora was staring at Rio's face.

Figuratively speaking, her expression as if something is missing.

"Ah, No. Sorry. Uhm, we have not met somewhere before right ? "

Flora asked timidly.

"No, I have no recollection for that"

Rio gently shook his head in denial without changing his expression.

"That must be so, right. Sorry. I just said something strange"

Flora smiled as if slightly dejected.

(Could it be that she noticed my identity ? )

Rio has cold sweat running along his back while maintaining his smile.

Though Roana didn't care too much about Rio's appearance, Flora kept stealing glances at Rio's face.

Though soon after that, Flora looked as if charmed by Rio's graceful features, somehow a strange atmosphere started to drift between them.

"Ara, is there something wrong ? Flora. Haruto will be troubled if you keep on staring at him like that"

Hiroaki interrupted the atmosphere between Rio and Flora with a slightly bored face.

"I-I'm sorry."

Flora was taken aback and suddenly apologized.

Though it was decided that they would have a pleasant talk with Hiroaki, Roana, and Flora until it the time to enter the venue came, Flora sometimes stared at Rio as if she can't help but do it.

"Your excellency Duke Kretia. It is the time. Please come in"

Soon, a soldier came in to inform that the time to enter the venue had come.

"Well then, it is regrettable, we will continue our conversation in the venue. We will make our ways to the party first"

After giving a signal to wait for a minute to the soldier with some light movements of his hand, Cedric told that to their guests.

"We are the ones who troubled you by staying longer. It seems we have lost the track of the time while enjoying the conversation with the Duke"

Flora spoke as their representative.

"It is my honor, to receive such words beyond me"

Cedric bowed deeply.

All at once they stood from the sofa where they sat.

"Well then, we will excuse ourselves first"

After saying those words they started towards the venue of the evening party.



# Chapter 91: The Scene of Evening Party

## Part 1

The full moon is floating in the beautiful and cloudless evening sky.

Anyone is dressing up to their preference, the nobles who was gathering in the hall which became the venue of evening party has reached 1000 people.

Though the maximum capacity of the high ceiling hall is reaching 2000 people, it seems just half of that number is the optimum number to hold an evening party with some leeway.

The inside of the vast hall is flourishing to the point that it didn't give a crowded impression.

Tonight, those nobles who are gathering from inside and outside of the country was surely the people who held central position in many countries.

Which means that one needs that kind of status to gather in this evening party, and it's the gathering of envy and jealousy from the nobles who can't participate in this evening party.

Splendor ornaments is scattered in various places such as ceiling, wall and, the floor, in case of the chandelier where the magic to ignite the light is loaded in it, the palace resident should be built with that much.

Whether it's the facility which became the venue or the people, everything is the best, that thing always tickles the superiority complex of the participant.

And then forming the groups amongst their own circle or country by scattering in various places, just tonight they're unaware about such boundary and is having a lively conversation amongst the participants.

"It's finally the debut of the hero-sama of our country"

"I heard the rumor saying that she's only a 17 years old girl"

"I've heard somewhere that this lady is extremely beautiful"

"Hou, I'm looking forward to meet her. Young people might be not so

desperate to tie their hand in marriage"

Though various conversation and discussion as if probing at the others true intention, bragging or, gossip have been unfolding, most of it was regarding Sumeragi Satsuki, the star of this event.

Because the concrete information regarding Satsuki is only shared between the people who hold central position of the country, that information usually couldn't appear in the market.

So much interest is gathering on her tonight, the nobles are tired of waiting or eagerly waiting for the day of the evening party, which is tonight.

"By the way, it seems the hero-sama who served under the banner of revolution government of Bertram kingdom is also participating today"

A group of nobles who was gathering on a certain place said that.

"Aah, him huh"

A noble give an immediate reply.

He's the person who came under the revolutionary government of Bertram kingdom who goes under the government of duke Euguno.

"Ooh, you're the person who was invited from the revolutionary government of Bertram kingdom aren't you. In that case, have you met the hero-sama ? "

"Yeah, I got the honor of having an audience with him once"

The male noble is showing a slightly triumphant look as he replied.

"Hou, what kind of personage was that person ? "

When one representative is asking, the line of sight brimming with curiosity is gathered at the male noble who have met Hiroaki.

"Though it seems that he has quite a strong personality, he's in the end still young..... Like that maybe. Maybe because he came from another world, he's still ignorant regarding the way of this world"

"Hahaha, when it comes to that, maybe he'll learn much with tonight's experience. I'm wishing for a wonderful hero-sama for our country too though"

"Please rest assured. Though it's a fortune that our country's hero-dono has

extensive knowledge, it seems he was also a flexible person. Duke Euguno is also admiring our splendid hero. Moreover, maybe because he's supported by the daughter of duke Fontine and your highness princess Flora, he came to agree with our ideal"

## Part 2

The male noble explained the favorable relationship with Hiroaki with his own position.

"Hou, that's a nice story. So it's like the saying, if you have the support of two young and beautiful girls, the man will make his stand. Someday, it'll go down on the history that he's a hero who devoted himself to save the country right"

"It's as you say. We're clasping our hands for that result, we can't help but to guide hero-dono to the appropriate stage for him"

And so forth, due to the occasion, even the topic regarding Hiroaki is spreading everywhere.

In today's evening party, the people who's coming from Bertram kingdom revolutionary government was the perfect public relation staff.

Because compared to Satsuki, they're not hiding any information regarding Hiroaki, and actively using that for their propaganda.

"Hahaha. For that reason we must devote ourself to him more than to ourself"

"Yeah, it'll become much more easier to guide if hero-sama is willing to improve himself. By all means, I want to become acquainted with Hero-sama tonight"

The surrounding nobles are nodding with a smile on their face.

Their glittering lust for power was hidden under that mask, some of them was the people who showed their ambition to become acquainted with the hero tonight.

Hero, they're a sacred existence who is also called as the apostle of the six wise god who is being revered in Strahl region.

The most suitable candidate to get powerful authority, they can give the power for nobles to sprung to the top in the power struggle in one go by stealing march from the other faction when that faction is facing their own

faction.

Therefore, if they've the chance of currying favour to the heroes, they'll make use of that chance to currying a favor to them.

"Come to think of it, maybe it's almost the time for all the nobles of our country to appear together"

The noble of Galwark kingdom said that.

"Since the people of duke Gregory house have entered a while ago, the next one should be the people of duke Kretia house right"

"Ooh, I happened to heard about it. That house prospering again is very enviable. It seems that they're basically rushing ahead, especially after their daughter is born"

"The most talented woman, Liselotte-sama isn't it. The words that's most suitable to describe her is definitely *"The woman who is gifted with both brain and beauty"*, right. She has no fiance yet, but, the most suitable candidate to approach duke Kretia house is....."

"Currently, she's slightly more like a unattainable flower for the youngsters around her age. Though the rumor of her marriage is never ceased, I wonder what kind of personage can capture her heart"

The topic regarding duke Kretia house is also rising in trend.

The topic regarding Liselotte is also highly popular outside of the country, to the point that someone who doesn't know about her in the noble circle of Galwark kingdom must be hiding themselves deep underground, it was turning into one talented woman who was gathering considerable attention.

Therefore it's already everyday gossip for them to ponder who will become her fiance.

Thereupon, at that time,

"DUKE KRETIA HOUSE AND VISITOR FROM A FAR PLACE IS ENTERING THE VENUE ! "

The voice of the soldier who is guarding the venue is resounding in the hall.

When the name of duke Kretia is announced, it's synonym to the big-shot for the domestic nobles, thus, the nobles in the hall fell into silence for a while.

It's been decided that they, the nobles of Galwark kingdom, when the time comes to enter the venue of the evening party, they'll be entering together, the remaining ones is part of the nobles who come from outside of the country, the royalty of Galwark kingdom and then, Satsuki as the last one.

And then, when they arrived after several seconds of silence——、

## Part 3

"..... Did that knight just say *“A visitor from a far place”*? "

"Yeah, I definitely heard that"

The people who's talking in small voices started to appear in various places of the hall.

If one asks *“where is the house which is currently most prospering in Galwark kingdom”*, then the existence of duke Kretia house will certainly become the topic for the conversation.

In short, it was the house which became the most trending topic in the Galwark kingdom.

And the soldier just said that this duke Kretia house is inviting someone from a far place in this most important evening party.

The people who have gathered in this place are only the people who are sensitive to the information amongst nobles, therefore, there's no way they won't have any interest in this news.

Inevitably, most of the nobles in the hall gathered their attention toward the stage regardless of their faction.

The nobles who belong to duke Kretia faction amongst them is quickly gathering toward the nearby stairs which is extending from the stage to the hall and then starting to wait for the entry while showing their respect.

The door is opening soon, and every member of the aforementioned duke Kretia house is making their entrance.

"..... OOOh"

A murmuring commotion is spreading in the hall a while after that.

Everyone's letting out a surprised voice.

Even so, that might be natural.

Because the scene at that place by no means was not something that they can

see everyday.

The first entering in the foremost is Cedric and Julianne, there's no problem at all with them.

There's ladies and gentlemen who's fascinated by their combination of beautiful and handsome couple who's brimming with youth even after so many years, though the scene where there's a gathering of envious looks from the companion of the partner is seen in various places, if speaking of a problem, it's only that much.

The one who entering next is Liselotte older brother, George Kretia and his fiancée, Collet Varie.

Though they're spending their time together with the marquis Varie couple, Collet's parents in the separate room, in the case of entering the venue in this occasion, they decided to enter together with Cedric and the others sometime ago.

Though those two who are famous for their mutual love which is rivaling the duke couple is known for the next generation of the duke couple, currently the people in the venue didn't focus on them.

"As I thought, they're gathering the attention huh....."

George letting out a wry smile as he promptly guessed the perplexed atmosphere drifting in the venue.

"It's not unnatural. Since I'm still perplexed too"

Collet's agreeing in a small voice.

Because they know that currently, the line of sight of the nobles in the hall is gathering to the two people behind them.

Yes, currently, the fact of the matter is resounding amongst the nobles who's inside the hall.

One is George's little sister, and also the sister-in-law of Collet, Liselotte—  
Who's currently being hailed as the most unattainable flower in Galwark kingdom, the impregnable beauty which have never had even one rumor of her romantic story up till now,



And then, the other person, where the line of sight of the nobles in the venue is gathering at— — Rio, the man who's affectionally linking his arm with the girl at his side.

No matter how Liselotte thinks about it, this method of entrance can be seen as nothing but treating Rio as her partner. [TL : as explained before, "Partner" for unmarried male/female almost like they're in relationship(especially if they're always come together to a party)]

That Liselotte, who never came along with a partner to a evening party up-till now.

## Part 4

Just by that, it's a big implication for her to come along with a partner to an evening party.

Regardless of domestic or foreign, there's many nobles who's planning to make Liselotte their wife.

That's also natural.

The lovely appearance that will charm the person who sees her, her gentle personality which is in favor to men, the connection with the distinguished duke Kretia house, the Rikka firm whose name is famous in the neighboring country—— It's because they'll gain everything of those if they marry Liselotte.

Therefore, though the marriage proposal is always coming and didn't die out, she kept refusing all of that up till now.

On the contrary, they're not happy with her bringing along a partner toward the evening party.

Though recently, a secret rumor is starting to spread saying that she's actually a lesbian, that expectation is magnificently overturned.

"..... Is there someone who knows that youth ? "

"No, I don't think so"

"Me too. Then, who is he....."

"His hair color aside, his features is giving a slightly exotic feeling"

"When it comes to that, I wonder where this personage came from"

The whispering of the male camp of the venue is talking about Rio while looking at him as if to ascertain his identity.

"Ara, he's a wonderful gentleman isn't he"

"Yeah, I wonder which house he comes from ? "

On the other hand, there was the people who sent an inquisitive gaze toward Rio amongst the young noble girls.

His hair which made one wonder whether it's glossy along with the smile on his androgynous face which have sharpness in it, his appearance as he slowly descends the stairs which is extending from the stage with a magnificent manner made one think that he's a young noble.

His appearance where there's no nervousness can be found in the line of sight which unreservedly gathered on him from the nobles, his appearance was no way inferior even when standing beside Liselotte.

He's brimming with manner as he entering the hall.

"Your excellency duke Kretia seems in a good mood"

A person was greeting duke Kretia as soon as he descended from the stairs.

It was a tall and slender man in his prime.

"Lord Varie. My son is always indebted to you. It seems that he was always under your care even during this stay in the capital"

Cedric replied with a smile.

It seems that the man in front of him is the father of Collet, George's fiance.

The woman who seems like the mother of Collet is waiting by his side.

"What are you talking about. Our daughter is also always under your care too. George-kun is really a good son. I'm also proud to become his father-in-law"

Collet father's replying with an intimate smile and then, sent a fleeting gaze at Rio.

"By the way, your excellency. For some reason, it seems that you're taking along a new visitor from a far place today. By all means, you should introduce him to us right ? "

"Hahaha. It seems the attention of the people in this venue is gathering at him"

Cedric's answering while smiling pleasantly.

## Part 5

"It's not like it's unnatural either. When it comes to the partner of your daughter, the young nobles of our country won't keep their silence"

For some reason, those two was chatting happily.

It seems that they're enjoying the current atmosphere of the venue.

"Let me introduce him to you, Haruto-kun. His name is marquis Lionel Varie. the father of Collet-kun, our George's fiancée. Lord Varie. He's Haruto-kun, a personal friend and the benefactor of Liselotte"

"Hou, a personal friend"

There's profound meaning in the way he said those words, Lionel's looking at Rio with a expression of great interest.

"I'm glad to meet you. Following the introduction. My name is Haruto. It's my honor to be able to meet your excellency marquis Varie"

Rio showed his manner as he greet Lionel.

"Uhm. I'm glad to meet you. It's a pleasant meeting you know"

Lionel's smiling with a courteous smile and quickly reaching his hand for a handshake.

"Thank you very much"

Rio quickly stretches his hand to clasp Lionel's hand.

"Let me introduce her. She's my wife, Camille"

After nodding at each other, Lionel introduced the woman who stand at his side to Rio.

"I'm glad to meet you. My name is Camille"

Camille pinched the cuff of her skirt and smiled with a lady-like smile.

"I'm glad to meet you. It's my honor to meet you"

Rio's bowed lightly to Camille while placing his right hand on his chest.

"I want to chat with you for a while longer but, the other people seemingly want to greet your excellency too. Since it seems there's so many people who's interested in you. So, I'll be stepping back for a moment. Well then, I'll excuse myself"

Thereupon, while giving a simple greeting of nodding to the others who was in this place, marquis Varie couple left from that place.

"Well then father, since me and Collet also need to give our greeting, later"

George and Collet is also leaving after saying those words.

Only four people are left at that place which is the duke Kretia couple, Liselotte and, Rio.

But, the other nobles are approaching right away as if replacing the ones who goes before them.

Though they greet Cedric and Julianne in the beginning, they came to greet Liselotte and Rio as if it's natural.

If it's the usual case, though those people will come closer to become intimate with Liselotte even just a little, they have a slightly different intention today.

Every one of them are seemingly interested in Rio, everyone who came want to introduce themselves and know about Rio.

## Part 6

Everytime a new one comes, it becomes a cycle of repeating a similiar introduction but, Liselotte who is used to this situation is certainly normal, Rio, who is also fed up with this situation is responding to all of them without showing his inner thoughts.

Though, currently the man who's standing in front of them has a slightly ruffian manner.

"Ooh, there was that kind of event huh. It's only natural that you're the benefactor of miss Liselotte"

He who said those words with a hearty smile was a plump man with a stout and proturding belly.

By the way, he is in the middle of his forties, and a big shot noble who holds the title of duke in Galwark kingdom.

"You're definitely talented aren't you. By all means, let me see with my own eyes, your great sword skill"

Duke Clement Gregory said those words while showing a smile on his face.

But, his eyes is looking attentively at Rio.

"If a nice opportunity came upon us"

Rio's sighing lightly deep in his heart and replied with the most harmless and inoffensive answer while smiling a humble smile at him.

Though most of the nobles are lightly probing at Rio while doing their best to greet Liselotte, Clement's probing is bold, and straightforward.

If it's the usual, the manner is to end the conversation after one or two minutes and yield to the one who have the superior position but, unfortunately, currently no one in the hall held a superior position than him.

Cedric and Julianne already moved to another place, no one can cover for them, Rio and Liselotte who got struck with calamity already accompanied Clement for 10 minutes.

During that time, Clement asked with lively speech the information about Rio.

He's boldly breaking the boundary without holding back, deliberately thickening his skin to ignore the atmosphere of the venue, moreover, he's talkative and tenacious, as expected of a veteran noble, they have no choice but to play along with him.

Though the given information was something that he don't mind even if given since the very beginning, or to put it in another words, Clement was a conversation partner which tired him out of his mind. [TL : And almost made me snap during translation]

"I'm eagerly waiting for this chance to come you know. I want to become closer to you"

"I feel honored if you say so"

Answering respectfully, Rio send a fleeting gaze to Liselotte who was standing by his side.

She's accompanying Clement's wife by herself and have no leisure to participate in his conversation.

Clement's wife was also quite shrewd herself, she's talking to Liselotte while showing a derisive smile.

Thus, following after.

"NEXT ENTERING, FOREIGN GUEST AS WELL, HERO, HIROAKI SAKATA-SAMA, SECOND PRINCESS OF BERTRAM KINGDOM, YOUR HIGHNESS FLORA BERTRAM ! "

The important guest from Bertram kingdom starting from Flora and Hiroaki is notified with a voice loud enough to resound in the hall.

"Ooh, it seems one of hero-dono is finally entering the stage"

Clement's facing the door on the stage with a inquisitive gaze.

"By the way, has miss Liselotte met lord Sakata before ? "

Continuing their conversation, Clement sent his line of sight to Liselotte.

## Part 7

"Yes, I already have had an audience several times with him"

"Hahaha. It seems he already taken a liking to you. As expected of you, our country's talented woman. If hero-dono also fell into your hand, I wonder what will become of a pure-hearted youth ? "

"Well, I don't think such things will happen. The likes of me is just like a baby when compared to someone like your excellency Gregory"

She's exchanging a line of sight while making a smile which made it difficult to read her emotion.

In the meantime, the door on the stage is opened, Hiroaki's party entered the venue.

First that appeared is an influential noble of Bertram kingdom starting from duke Euguno. Duke Euguno's son, Stead is also appearing amongst them.

Discovering his appearance, Rio was looking at Stead while slightly squinting his eye.

Behind them, Hiroaki proudly appearing from the door while puffing his chest. Flora and Roana was waiting upon him from both sides.

"Hou..... Beauty who's not different from the rumor. Your highness second princess of Bertram kingdom"

"Yeah, but, the girl who's on the other side also quite of outstanding talent. She can even be compared with your highness princess side by side"

"Certainly, she's the daughter of duke Fontaine house is it ? "

The line of sight of the nobles in the hall is gathered to the three of Hiroaki's party.

Amongst them, the young noble of relatively close age with them is sending a passionate gaze to Flora and Roana.

Though they're also like that when Liselotte's entering, as expected, it might be already in the nature of men to have their line of sight snatched away by



beautiful women.

"Please come Haruto-sama, since there's people who I want to introduce to you no matter what. I'll excuse myself then, your excellency"

The atmosphere of the venue is luckily changed with the entrance of Hiroaki and co, Rio and Liselotte decided to finish their conversation with the Clement pair.

"Ooh, It was hard for you to be detained for so long right. My son also wants to meet you. Since he's in this venue, please come to meet him by all means"

"Certainly. Certainly, if chance come upon us"

After saying that while showing an insincere smile, Rio decided to heading toward the nearby terrace taking along Liselotte.

"How about a drink ? "

"I'll take it with gratitude"

After receiving beverage from a waitress which they meet on the way, they appeased their throat which was being abused by talking for so long.

Rio drank the perfectly chilled cocktail in the glass made of silver.

The slightly lowered alcohol content color is quite murky yellow.

"You're tired aren't you, Haruto-sama ? "

"No, it's still not a problem"

Rio was gently shaking his head while showing a friendly smile.

"Duke Gregory was quite a lively person right ? Yeah, he's someone to whom you can't show careless action. The good side is that he won't greet you if he didn't like you though"

Liselotte's speaking while showing a troubled smile.

"A friendly personage right. Though he's a different type from Cedric-sama, I felt that he's someone who has mastered the art of conversation"

## Part 8

"He's someone who belongs to a different faction than father. Though he's not that hostile, he's not friendly either. He might be interested in Haruto-sama who I brought along right"

"It's not a wonder that he can boldly ask various things right"

Rio replied while smiling wryly and sent a fleeting gaze to inside of the hall.

The venue became quite lively, currently, many nobles are swarming to give their greeting to Hiroaki and co who just appeared in the venue.

It seems they're fully enjoying the party after meeting him.

"By the way, have the person who you want to introduce already in the venue..... ? "

"Fufu, that's just an excuse to escape from that place. Since it's quite long ahead right. I think that you want to have a short break"

Liselotte showed an impish smile as she said that.

"As I thought, so it's that"

Rio also replied with a amusing smile.

There's not many people nearby the terrace.

It might be the most ideal place for a short break.

"Hero-sama and our royalty will be entering soon. Since I'm going to be introducing myself at that time, if you're okay with it, please use that chance to make contact with her"

"Certainly"

Rio's expressing his gratitude with a light bow.

"By the way, I catch a glimpse of one of the nobles who was making trouble in the incident in the restaurant of Almond....."

So, Rio told that to Liselotte about Stead who he caught a glimpse of a while ago.

For the time being, it might be better to share this information.

"I see. Since I never told you about why he's here, though I've thought of possibilities..... My apologies"

It seems Liselotte understand his intention right away.

"No, my side is told that he wants to come to this place, him being in this place is an act of god. Please don't mind about him"

"Thank you very much"

Rio nodded while smiling to Liselotte who he tells his gratitude.

"There's the matter of the contract, though it's hard to think that he'll come to make a mess of something, please report to me if you want something. Is that okay? "

"Yes. Of course. Please say if there's something since you gave an indirect warning to me"

"My deepest apologies. I ended up troubling you"

"It's not like that you know"

## Part 9

Liselotte's gently shaking his head.

After that, they decided to chat for a while in the corner of the venue.

He received a brief introduction of the influential nobles of Galwark kingdom from afar by Liselotte, Rio's putting in his head the human relationship diagram with their influential power.

"NEXT ONE ENTERING, YOUR MAJESTY THE KING, FRANCOIS GALWARK AND THE HONORABLE HERO, SATSUKI SUMERAGI ! "

Soon the informant knight told that the main guest and her sponsor is entering soon.

"It seems it's the time. Please follow me. I'll introduce you to hero-sama and your majesty"

"Yes. I'm looking forward to working along with you"

And then, the two of them started to walk to the vicinity of the stage.

Just when they finally arrived under the stairs which stretching from the stage, the leading actor finally made their entrance.

"HIS MAJESTY THE KING, AS WELL AS HERO-SAMA, ARRIVED ! "

The atmosphere of the place changed rapidly as the people is obediently waiting for their entrance.

Rio and Liselotte also stood while showing admiration pose, they're waiting for the entrance while gently hanging their head down.

And finally, the sound of the opening of the door on stage is resounding in the silent hall.

"EVERYONE, RAISE YOUR FACE ! "

The imperial knight replaced the king to send his words.

When everyone heard the permission, they raised their gaze toward the stage as if couldn't hold back their curiosity. Even Rio was looking on the stage. On

that place, there's the figure of royalty starting from the king.

And then, a slender black haired girl was standing in the middle of them.

Tightly straightened her back, she's releasing a pressure which won't lose to the royalty at her surrounding.

Yes, She certainly is Sumeragi Satsuki, the person which became the reason for Rio to come to this place.

Author Note :

Since many new nobles made their appearance in this chapter, here is their brief introduction. Please check it when you have some time.

Cedric Kretia : Liselotte's father.

Julianne Kretia : Liselotte's mother.

George Kretia : Liselotte's older brother.

Collet Varie : George's fiance, Liselotte's sister-in-law.

Lionel Varie : Collet's father, a marquis.

Camille Varie : Collet's mother, a marquis lady.

Clement Gregory : The most important noble of Galwark Kingdom, a duke.

Stead Euguno : the person who made trouble with Rio in the Almond restaurant. Under house arrest until just recently.

Francois Galwark : King of Galwark kingdom.

# Chapter 92: Fast Contact

## Part 1

Anyone in the hall is noticing that Satsuki is standing on the stage with a dignified manner.

Despite she still has the trace of an innocence, her well-ordered appearance is not just a mere beauty, she's dignified, there was a charm which will unintentionally attract the surrounding gaze.

Satsuki is wrapped in a pure white dress which gives a translucent feeling with her white complexion, her long, beautiful and, glossy black hair is collected together and braided loosely with side style.

A sharp glint-like spear in which one can feel her strong will is reflected in her eyes.

(She's more or less the student council president of the high-school in which I went to in my previous life right ? )

Rio's strengthening his eyes with spirit arts to look at Satsuki's face while slightly squinting his eyes.

From what he heard from Miharu, he knew that Satsuki was going to the same high-school as Haruto, she's his senior by one year and wise student who was working as student council president.

Her house is a distinguished family which manages a large family, she's boasting the superior record of the only student council president, a talented woman both in military arts and literal arts even for sports, have a high popularity, and seemingly quite an idol within the school.

But, she's transferred to this world as soon as Haruto is entering the school, so Rio didn't really know about her till he heard about her information from Miharu and co but——

Though maybe because he caught a glimpse of her appearance when she gave her greeting during the entrance ceremony, time have passed about ten

years in his own memories.

It's just natural that Rio no longer remembers about her by this time.

Though the current Satsuki is just smiling, he couldn't read her emotions from this distance.

It seems as if she puts on a mask to completely hide her own feelings.

"You're successfully gathering everyone's attention huh. It's fixed on you right"

From the height on the stage, the king, Francois Galwark told that information to his right.

Despite being low and said in a calm manner, it's refinement is perfectly penetrating in all directions.

"What I want to say is that many of those who has gathered right now is coming from both domestic and foreign countries. Because everyone too, as we know, want to introduce themselves"

Saying so, Francois was looking at Satsuki who's standing slightly behind on his right side.

"Let me introduce her. This girl is the hero who descended into our Galwark kingdom——、 Satsuki Sumeragi-dono"

Following Francois's introduction, Satsuki's bowing with a smile on her face.

Thereupon, a stirring "OOOH !" voice is resounding in the venue at this moment.

"How beautiful"

"My goodness, as expected of hero-sama"

"That pure white brilliance. She's an angel"

"She definitely is our hero"

Every place of the hall is boisterous with the sound of many people speaking.

Maybe because she's more beautiful than expected, or because the curiosity of her exotic black hair, it seems young men is particularly excited by her

appearance.

Some of them even speaking lines which stink like a drama scenario for exaggerated confession of love.

Looking at Satsuki and co that appeared like this, Sakata Hiroaki lets out a slightly moody expression.

"What did you think, Hiroaki-sama ? "

Quickly sensing the slight change in Hiroaki's expression who stands beside her, Roana asked in a low voice.

"It's nothing, I just feel that it's a extremely showy play. Everyone in the venue is focusing on Satsuki"



## Part 2

Hiroaki said that while looking at everyone in his surrounding.

Roana's smiling and then,

"What are you talking about. Currently, the curiosity gathering toward that person is just temporary. The people in this place who is noticing Hiroaki-sama is around the same amount as her"

She murmured so close to Hiroaki ears.

"Aah, Well. I don't want that kind of attention to gathering on me"

Hiroaki's smiling wryly as if unwilling for that to happen to him.

"Ara, didn't you said just a few days ago to formally walk along with us ? Seeing that you're the one who admitted that that you're a hero, now the attention which won't lose with the current attention will be gathering on Hiroaki-sama"

Roana told that to Hiroaki with a impish smile.

Though Hiroaki was temporarily acting together with Flora and co up till now, he promised to cooperate with Flora and co as an official hero just few days ago.

Though it was somehow contradicting his action as a hero when he just arrived in this world, it seems he strengthened his determination to become a hero during these several months.

"I won't show such shameful behavior from now on you know. It's a promise. I'll protect you. .... Yeah, a man won't go back on his words"

Hiroaki's shrugged his shoulder lightly after making that declaration with a slightly embarrassed face.

"Thank you very much. In that case, as weak as I'm, I'll support Hiroaki-sama by your side"

Roana seized Hiroaki's arm as she said those words.

Hiroaki smiled and then placed his other hand on top of Roana's hand.

(Though at first I was thinking of building a harem by becoming a carefree adventurer, now I really don't feel like leaving Roana's side. guard is still high but I can't abandon Flora either. Well, there's no guarantee that I'll be living better than now if I became an adventurer. There's hero routes with similar developments)

Looking over the return of his mental state, Hiroaki's letting out a wry smile as if deeply moving in his heart.

Thereupon, at that time,

"SILENT ! YOU'RE IN THE PRESENCE OF HIS MAJESTY THE KING ! "

Unable to watch the venue becoming even more noisy, the imperial guard who served the king said that with a loud voice which resounded in the venue.

And then, the noise stopped, even Hiroaki and Roana who were secretly conversing also stopped too.

They turn their line of sight back to Satsuki and co who is standing on the stage.

"It's okay. It's just natural that everyone is delighted"

Francois told that while smiling happily.

"Indeed, it's a hero who descended after more than a thousand years. Since they might be the good news coming from the six wise god.

Moreover, there'll be good news tonight. Though many people know about this, another hero has also come to this place. Hero, Hiroaki Sakata, princess Flora and then, duke Euguno. This way"

## Part 3

Francois is calling Hiroaki and co toward the stage.

"Yes"

Hiroaki replied with a slightly nervous voice.

Though it has developed as predicted beforehand, he never experienced the feeling of that much people paying attention to him back on earth.

So it's just natural that he's quite nervous.

"Well then, first we've got an important announcement from duke Euguno who's acting as proxy of your highness princess Flora, the second princess of Bertram kingdom. I hope that everyone is listening to it carefully"

Francois is taking a step backward after he told Hiroaki and co to ascend to the stage.

And instead, duke Euguno's descending one step lower on the stairs while overlooking the nobles in the hall.

"Following the introduction. My name is Gustave Euguno. Today. I've received the chance from your majesty the king to tell an important matter to everyone, I've told everyone regarding that matter by using this chance in this place"

After introducing himself and saying his respect, duke Euguno started his speech solemnly.

"First, a coup d'etat happened which was incited by Helmut Albo, a treacherous retainer for Bertram kingdom, I think everyone already knows that he's taken over the government and is using your majesty king Phillip III as his puppet. Though we've no evidence regarding this matter. we received news regarding duke Albo about the fact that he's secretly working along with the Proxia empire. Even when judging from circumstantial evidence, we've come to a conclusion that the possibilities of him being guilty is infinitely high. And, if this is true, he's a traitor who sold the Bertram kingdom. Even not to mention the fact that he's usurping political powers by means called coup d'etat, there's no way I can just shut my eyes to his disrespect toward your majesty the king"

Duke Euguno said that with an expression as if truly regretting that fact.

The nobles in the venue is lending their ears while holding their breath regardless of their nationality.

After taking a short breath, duke Euguno speaking with a heavy tone for the second time.

"It's truly regrettable that we failed in saving as many royalty as we can during the start of the coup d'état. But, in the end we can only save your highness princess Flora who was studying in the royal academy during the day of coup d'état. So, I gathered the like-minded comrades who's untainted by the misgovernment of duke Albo, by having the traditional symbol of Bertram kingdom in your highness princess Flora, we decided to gather that kind of people. Our goal is to vacating the government of the Bertram kingdom to be given to it's righteous ruler and revival of the good-old Bertram kingdom. That's right, we stand for a greater purpose called the revival of Bertram kingdom. That's why, using this occassion I will make a declaration. We're in this place is the anti government organization of the current Bertram kingdom, 'RESTORATION'"

## Part 4

Duke Euguno is stopped talking for a moment in that part.

Francois is stepping up for the second time and then,

"Thus, our Galwark kingdom is making a declaration in this place that we recognize the establishment of 'Restoration'"

Said that as if following along the words of duke Euguno.

Though their standing was informally acknowledged as “Revolutionary Army” up till now, their official organization is now established, that official announcement is followed by "Oooh" sounds which was resounding in the venue.

"For your highness princess Flora who ascended to the position of leader of this organization, I've made a decision to give my support. And then, even the hero, Hiroaki Sakata-dono gives his promise to officially cooperate with our'Restoration'"

After telling that, Duke Euguno turned his hand toward Hiroaki, thus the line of sight of the people in the venue gathered toward Hiroaki.

Hiroaki's raising a grin and answering their line of sight by raising his right hand.

Rio was looking as if observing him who was acting like that.

(So daring huh)

Rio feels that way as he's looking at Hiroaki whose smile is filled with self-confidence.

In this moment, Hiroaki made a decision to publicly throw himself into the struggle for power of Bertram kingdom.

That's right, the curtain of the act has opened.

Duke Euguno might have gone as far as making various preparations to drag Hiroaki to the point that he can't no longer step back.

Money, woman, power, status, honor——, He expected that it was easy to guide Hiroaki who's still young in age if he uses those along with some flattery.

Therefore, Hiroaki already lost the way to retreat.

And have no choice but to go forward.

If he must say his true feeling, Rio felt that there's no need for Flora and co to bask under the light again.

With Bertram kingdom currently plunged into a chaotic situation, the point of yelling their grumbling like words such as "taking back the good old glory" is impossible for them who already degenerated to this point.

That was as expected.

But, maybe fate is playing a prank on her, Hiroaki, the hero under Flora and co now appeared to have a great sense of moral and sense of reality.

Despite that fact alone didn't change the fact that the level of difficulties is still high.

At any rate, whether Hiroaki have some sort of feeling for a mission aside, currently, a monstrous duty called hero is befallen upon his shoulder.

Duke Euguno also makes sure for Hiroaki to plunge himself and never be able to separate again in his own political strife.

There's the possibility that Hiroaki might have resolved himself to accepting that role. Or he might have done nothing but be swallowed by the situation.

(Well, that's a trivial matter. The most important problem is Satsuki-san)

That's right, he has no leeway to think about Hiroaki's situation.

Rio changed his line of sight from Hiroaki toward Satsuki as if brushing him aside.

Similar problem with Hiroaki is also following behind Satsuki.

Seeing that this is the public announcement of her as the hero under the government of Galwark kingdom, it's inevitable for Satsuki to be deeply influenced by this world and this country.

Maybe Satsuki feels that she wants to go back to earth, or maybe she wants

to finish her duty as a hero in this world, or how to set up a reunion of the current Satsuki with Miharuru and co.

Though he has to proceed with caution, seeing that Miharuru and co wishes to meet with Satsuki again, it's nothing but a means to start an approach from this point.

In short, everything is up to his own luck.

## Part 5

(Let's see then. It was always up to chance up till this point)

Whether it's when he is entering the royal academy of Bertram kingdom, his meeting with Latifa, when he's going toward Yagumo region to trace the footsteps of his parent or, in the current case to execute his plan of revenge toward Lucius.

Since the world is filled with uncertain factors which are incomprehensible even for him, he's not a god, what's waiting in the future is not something that he knows of.

After deciding his goal and doing everything he can do, what comes next is just to walk forward to what is in front of him——, it's just that.

Therefore, now he should concentrate on what he should do.

First is about what Satsuki is thinking about, he has to aim for contact with her to know about that.

And that time is close by.

"With this, there's also a important announcement from me. We've made a decision that our hero, Satsuki Sumeragi, will officially form an alliance with the hero of the anti-government of Bertram kingdom, 'Restoration', Hiroaki Sakata "

Francois, the king of Galwark kingdom who's currently standing on the stage, made a declaration at the most critical moment.

"Our future will be bright by walking side-by-side with two of the heroes, the disciple of the six wise gods. Thereupon, O hero. I want to ask you again. Will thou advance to follow us from behind ? "

Following the previous declaration, Francois is asking again while turning toward Satsuki.

Satsuki's reaction to those words was only a minute twitching of her eyebrows.

But, the change on her expression disappeared immediately and,



".....Yes. As long as you're walking on the righteous path, I, Sumeragi Satsuki will give my utmost support despite my poor ability"

Satsuki's answering him without hesitation.

Maybe because she's used to have the line of sight coming to her from many people, she doesn't seem to be nervous at all.

The sound of clapping was reverberating in the venue as if welcoming Satsuki.

Following that, the line of sight of the people in the venue is gathering toward Hiroaki.

(A~h, he should be talking a bit more since he's from the position of the one who made the request. It seems the living being called king is quite the prideful person\*) [TL\* : Not too sure – あー、お願いする立場なんだからもう少しモノの言い方ってのがあろうに。国王って生き物は偉そうで好かん]

Hiroaki's thinking something like that deep in his heart.

Maybe because his standing as the king, the haughty way of Francois's manner of speaking was irritating him.

Hiroaki disliked being looked down upon.

But——,

"Yeah, Understood. As long as your conduct is right, I swear that I'll give my cooperation to your side too"

Hiroaki's answering while nodding in a composed manner.

(Or rather, the king with his imperial rule can put on an air of self importance is also because he is the holder of the highest authority. Therefore, I, the hero chosen by the six wise gods should have more authority than him right. Thereupon, though it's annoying me in the way he's praising himself and looking down on others..... I'll just cooperate with him in this place and become a generous person)

## Part 6

Persuading himself, Hiroaki made a compromise with his own self.

He thinks about something like that as the line of sight of the surrounding is gathering on him, maybe, he's unexpectedly a big hearted person.

There's no reason for them to know Hiroaki's inner grumbling, the claps of people in the venue is reverberating as if giving a blessing to the two heroes.

"That's all. Well then, now, please enjoy the evening party to your hearts content"

Francois said those words which signaled the official opening of the evening party.

The inside of the venue is starting to get noisy, each one of the participants is starting their own action.

"Well then Haruto-sama, it's a bit sudden but, shall we go to the hero-sama's place ? "

"Yes, By all means"

Rio's following Liselotte as they're moving quickly to meet Satsuki.

Apart from Cedric and co who's moving independently, they're climbing the stairs toward the stage with just the two of them.

Though there's tacit manners related to the sequential order or status even when climbing the stairs toward the stage, if Rio's lead by Liselotte, a duke's daughter, there's no problem to move to that place immediately.

It seems they're the first ones who arrived at the stage.

どうやらリオ達が一番乗りのようだ。

"I'm pleased to meet you, your majesty Francois"

First, Liselotte gave a splendor greeting toward Francois, the king.

Following by Satsuki who is standing at his side, Hiroaki, Flora, duke Euguno and the likes also the other royalty on that stage.

Though everyone was currently chatting in a pleasant mood, when they're noticing that Liselotte is giving her greeting first, the one who knows of her was welcoming her with a bright smile.

"Ooh, Liselotte. It's been a while. I've heard about the matter of Almond. That was such misfortune"

Francois, their representative is coming to greet her.

"My deepest apology for causing another worry to you. I am honored to be blessed with a chance to be receiving your majesty's countenance again"

Telling that, Liselotte displayed an impressive bow as she's placing both of her hands on her abdomen.

"It's okay. I was lucky to be able to see you safe and sound again. And then, this person over here, is he your partner? I couldn't help but to get curious about the unusual thing"

"Yes. His name is Haruto-sama, he's the one who saved my life in the Almond incident. It was a kindness which I couldn't pay back to Haruto-sama. So I thought to bring him today to return his kindness, with all due respect, to come as my partner"

"Hou, so your name is Haruto. You've got such great moral"

Francois told that while sending a fleeting gaze to Rio.

"I'm unworthy of such great praise. Despite If it's the normal case, someone of humble origin such as myself shouldn't be able to come to this place, I'm extremely delighted that I'm blessed with fortune to be able to meet with your majesty, "

Rio's kneeling in a respectful manner and then facing his head down.

"Excellent, I'll permit it. You may raise your face"

## Part 7

Francois answered as if used to it.

"Ha. My deepest gratitude to be granted with your exceptional kindness"

Rio raised his posture while placing his left hand on his abdomen, and then placing his right fist on top of his left chest.

It was the highest attitude of giving a honor known to the populace of the noble.

Tightly grasping one own heart with right hand, and then demonstrating a nonresistance action in not holding any weapon by placing left hand on the abdomen.

"Fumu, you've a nice look. But, your features is slightly different, may I ask your origin ? "

"..... The place I was born is Bertram kingdom. But, I'm on a journey to a distant place and left that country a few years ago"

In hearing those words, Duke Euguno and Flora who was originally from Bertram Kingdom have their expression slightly changed.

Though he didn't want to gather excessive attention from them, since there's Liselotte by his side to who he divulged the part of his birth, he can't afford to tell a lie.

"Hou, in that case, your parents must have come from another country. Which country did they come from ? "

"Their origin is the place called Yagumo region which is far in the eastern direction of this place, in that region there's a country called Karasuki Kingdom"

"Ooh, so it's the Yagumo region huh. Though diplomatic relationship have long since ceased out, there's a legend about that country being passed down in our country. I recall that there are warriors who migrated to Strahl region by crossing over the savage land between the two regions"

For the time being, he can relax his guard by telling him about his lineage.

It seems he's attracting Francois's curiosity when he's talking about the Yagumo region.

The conversation is flowing quite well.

"I've heard a very interesting story. Let me say my gratitude. I want to hear a bit more about that story, so please tell me again later if the chance have come upon us" [TL : This might be a flag]

Since there's a time restriction too, it seems Francois also won't probe deeper than this.

He interrupted their conversation by that point while seemingly slightly regretting it.

"My deepest gratitude for your words which is more than this humble one deserved"

Rio's courteously bowing his head.

"It's a rare occasion, your majesty. If possible, may we giving our greeting to Satsuki-sama too ? "

Liselotte's giving a sidelong wink toward Rio as she says that.

Moreover, Rio who is noticing that signal is smiling lightly.

"Uhm, this is also the first time for you to meet Satsuki-dono. Let me introduce her. Satsuki-dono, she's Liselotte. The only daughter of Duke Cedric Kretia, the chief vassal of our country"

So, Francois immediately introduced Liselotte to Satsuki who's standing by his side.

"I'm glad to meet you. Satsuki-sama. My name is Liselotte Kretia. It's my honor to be able to meet you"

Liselotte's introducing herself with a smile on her face and then, quickly presented her hand to Satsuki.

Different from the other people, Liselotte's accent when she called Satsuki's name has a subtle difference when she said it.

Maybe because she perceived that slight difference, Satsuki's staring at

Liselotte's face.

## Part 8

"..... Yeah, my pleasure to meet you. My name is Satsuki Sumeragi. Please take care of me in the future"

When Satsuki's grasping that hand, she returned Liselotte's greeting with a wide smile on her face.

"Let me introduce him. He is Haruto-sama\*, the partner of mine"[TL\*: Katakana]

And now, Liselotte's introducing Rio to Satsuki.

"Haruto\* ? "[TL\* : Hiragana]

In hearing the japanese-like name, Satsuki was letting out a slight muttering.

"I'm glad to meet you. My name is Haruto. It's my honor to be able to meet Satsuki-dono\* who's a hero" [TL\* : in kanji]

After he called Satsuki's name with such unnaturally mastered pronunciation, Rio was presenting his hand to Satsuki.

To that pronunciation, it's not just Satsuki, Liselotte's eyes also has a slight fluctuation in it.

Satsuki clasped Rio's hands with a smile on her face.

"Yeah, it's a pleasure to me-....."

While saying that as she has a handshake with Rio, Satsuki's eyes suddenly opened wide.

After looking around restlessly on her surrounding for a moment, she was staring at Rio's face with intense concentration a while later.

It was a slightly suspicious behavior when seeing from the side.

"Is there something on my face ? "

After Rio asked with a composed smile, Satsuki was smiling awkwardly as if coming to her senses.

"It's nothing, my apology. It's nothing. Uhm, your name sounds slightly

familiar with one of my motherland....."

Clasping their hand just like that while clearing her throat with a cute short "cough", thereupon, Satsuki replied while gently shaking her head in denial.

Maybe in her own mind, there's a small voice that is heard like a shrill.

"Is that so ? Though it's slightly unusual in the country around this region, it doesn't mean that you really will not hear such name resounding. Ah, which reminds me, it was a popular name in my parents homeland"

When Rio was telling her that, Satsuki slightly squinted her eyes.

"Hee, now I'm slightly interested in it. I want to hear your story regarding your homeland before long"

Satsuki's staring at Rio for a slightly longer duration while saying those words.

"Yes, if chance come upon us. Though it seems that you're busy with your greeting, if possible please just say it when you have some free time during the evening party"

Rio is saying that with a unclouded smile on his face.



## Part 9

"Yeah, I, definitely, will get that chance"

Satsuki also returning with a wide smile while emphasizing the “Definitely” part.

Thus, accordingly.

"O~y, both of you. How long will you clasp your hand like that ? "

Maybe because he’s unable to watch them continuously clasp their hand just like that, Hiroaki was butting into their conversation.

"Well, I’ll excuse myself then. Somehow, I don’t think that this is my first meeting with Satsuki-sama"

Rio was apologizing while smiling wryly as he released his hand which was clasped by Satsuki.

"Oh my, how coincidental. I feel the same way too"

Satsuki’s agreeing to Rio’s words while showing a mischievous smile which can’t be seen through.

To those two who showed a strangely-like-minded-comrade, the people of their surroundings was slightly surprised.

"This is the first time Satsuki-dono’s showing such an expression. It seems that somehow both of you are really getting along. It’s a wonder to meet with such a person"

Francois told that as if admiring them.

The people of the surrounding also nodded lightly while slightly bewildered as a way to affirm those words.

"Shall we go back to below soon, Haruto-sama"

Though just a little, Liselotte’s also taken aback but, she came and addressed Rio with a composed tone.

Since there’s still many people to whom she wants to give her greeting in this

place, it's not desirable to prolong their conversation more than this.

"Yes. Acknowledged"

Rio immediately accepted Liselotte's proposal.

"Well then your majesty, it's slightly regrettable but, we must leave for the time being"

"Uhm. Let's have a nice conversation again soon. At that time, with Cedric and the others too"

"Yes. With pleasure"

Liselotte consented with her best smile.

Thus, they leave that place.

To those two—— No, it's toward Rio's back, Satsuki was looking at him wearing an expression as if she's pondering something on her face.

=

# Chapter 93: Presenting This Hand

## Part 1

When they're returning toward the floor of the hall at the bottom of the stairs after giving their greeting to Satsuki, Rio and Liselotte is being greeted again by the nobles.

The number of people who come is so much, each one of them is finishing their greeting after just a short while.

And then, the swarms of the nobles who is coming is also decreasing little by little.

"Well then, Liselotte-sama. I'll take my leave then. Please send my regards to your highness duke Cedric-sama"

"Yes, I'll do so. See you again"

After bidding their farewell, the two of them is leaving the last noble who's coming at them.

When one part of the wave of nobles ceased, Liselotte sent a fleeting gaze to Rio who's standing by her side.

"Haruto-sama, have you already finished your business that you have to do toward Satsuki-sama\* ? Though you said that you wanted to say something....."[TL\* : in katakana]

She meant that he wanted to talk with Satsuki to the point that he expressed his wish to attend the evening party.

Though in normal situations, someone will think about something important, the Rio of sometime ago is ending his greeting with just a simple exchange.

Despite they was doing a handshake for quite a while, it didn't look like an action in which he's unnaturally trying to stretch the conversation, it doesn't seem that he's trying to convey something to Satsuki.

When it comes to that, she thinks that Rio has yet to convey something to

Satsuki.

Was what Liselotte feels.

Moreover, the resounding of the way Rio called Satsuki's name which she heard a while ago, just how he— —

"To tell the truth, I still have something I'm wishing to tell her. But, just to be able to meet her like this also has its own meaning. Thus, maybe I already finished telling her the important matter"

Rio's replying in a way of speaking as if to confuse the other party.

Liselotte was unable to seize the true meaning behind those words in that moment.

No, maybe she won't even be able to see through the true meaning behind those words even if she's spending her time pondering about it.

Since she is currently overwhelmingly lacking the information to be able to do that.

But, despite unable to put it nicely in the words, she caught something.

Liselotte felt so.

But, now isn't the right time to be deriving an answer from that.

"Understood."

Eventually, Liselotte couldn't even ask more than the first question in this situation.

"If we're waiting for a while longer, it's time for a dance. If it's okay with you, will you dance in the same tune with me at that time ? "

Liselotte asked with a slightly troubled smile as if to deny that hazy idea.

Normally, the manners for applying for a dance is coming from the male side but, seeing the relationship between the two sides, it doesn't mean that she's breaching the manners when the invitation is coming from her.

"Yeah, with pleasure"

Rio's nodding and replied immediately.

And then, at that time,

"May I have a dance too ? "

From behind Rio and facing Liselotte, there was the sound of a greeting by two people.

The daughter of duke Fontaine of Bertram kingdom, Roana.

"This is, Roana-san. Nice to meet you"

## Part 2

Liselotte who noticed her earlier is giving a light bow.

"Good evening, Roana-sama"

Rio also turned back and gave his greeting followed by a light bow.

"Yeah, nice to meet you too. Both of you——"

"WHA, Y-YOU ! "

Just when Roana's about to say something, a loud voice was resounding as if covering her voice.

The people in the vicinity's turning their line of sight to the owner of that voice while wondering "*what's happened*".

Rio and that person—— Stead Euguno, who was looking like he was slightly taken aback.

"W-Why are you in this place ? "

Stead was asking Rio with tone full of hostility.

"Even if you ask why, as you can see that I'm participating in this evening party"

Rio's answering while smiling wryly without even being disturbed by him.

Maybe because it's affecting his temper, Stead's expression becomes steep.

"I invited him to this party. Is the answer to your question. Stead Euguno-san"  
[TL : this is the first time Liselotte's using -san as suffix for someone on the same rank as her, in short she's looking down on him]

Liselotte's explaining the situation to Stead without putting on any air.

Stead's expression was slightly astonished, and then,

"..... You are ? "

He's asking for Liselotte's name.

"My apologies for my late introduction. My name is Liselotte Kretia. It's a

pleasure to meet you"

"!!!..... You're Liselotte. I was always hearing the rumors about you"

Maybe because he remembered Liselotte's features following her introduction, Stead has a slightly cramped face.

She's the only daughter of duke Kretia, the prominent big-shot noble even in Galwark kingdom, the talented woman whose name is resounding in the neighbouring country, the key figure of Galwark kingdom who's working as the young CEO of Rikka firm——

And then, there's also the prefectural governor of Almond in which Stead caused a problem sometime ago, she's also the person in the position to guarantee the effect of the contract which binded with Rio during that trouble.

If someone of her position is inviting Rio in this evening party, at least the two of them have some kind of solid relationship.

Even for Stead, it doesn't mean that he doesn't understand it's meaning.

"Though it seems that you two have never met, is Haruto-san an acquaintance of Stead-kun ? "

So, Roana who is left on the side asked to them as she grasped onto something.

"Ah, No, That's..... Uhm..... That's....."

## Part 3

Stead was unintentionally stuttered as he can't explain the truth of the situation.

"Maybe you can say that they're an acquaintance. Though I can't say it loudly, there was a little trouble between them sometime ago in Almond. Haruto-sama's the victim. At that time, Rikka firm was acting as the mediator for the reconciliation contract between the two party. Due to that chance, I had a chance to become closer to Haruto-sama"

Liselotte was giving a simple explanation to Roana regarding the event of that time as she feels that it'll cause trouble if the explanation is coming from Rio.

"What are you doing during such an important time..... Because of that, do you have something for your excuse ? "

Roana was asking to Stead while pouring at him her undisguised line of sight which was filled with astonishment and disdain.

"KUH....."

Stead is hanging down his head as if embarrassed while clenching his fist.

With that reaction, Roana made a conclusion that Stead was at fault in those events.

"My deepest apologies. My acquaintance has brought trouble upon you"

Thereupon, after sighing shortly as if troubled with it, Roana decided to apologize to Rio after ascertaining the truth.

Seeing that Rikka firm becoming the witness of the reconciliation, she doesn't want to put a doubt in all case, it's not a good plan to give a bad impression of Rio who's the benefactor of Liselotte and it's to protect Stead who's coming along with her.

"It's nothing, that matter already settled. It's not a problem since I received the protection from the contract"

Rio replied while gently shaking his head.



When he tells a digest of the content of the contract, it then becomes——  
The prohibition of any kind of interference thereafter from Stead's side in regards to not ask indirectly or directly about the people who's related to Rio, the victim's side.

When it comes to explaining it arbitrarily, you can say that it'll be a breach of the contract just by approaching Rio, though unexpectedly, one could say that an accidental meeting like this is barely stepping into the grey zone.

Though if given a choice, Rio didn't want to have another meeting with Stead, this kind of meeting just like this case is an act of god, in case Stead is being obedient, Rio didn't even feel like blaming or threatening him with that event sometime ago.

That's already a trivial matter to him—— or so, As long as the other party over there didn't try to harm Miharu and co.

"I'm really sorry for that. Please let me offer my sincere apology. Stead, you must also apologize once again to this person by yourself"

Roana said that while still bowing herself.

Stead is wearing an absolutely discontent expression on his face.

"Na! Why must I to this guy ! The contract is already made, that matter is finished you know!"

Stead is objecting as if screaming.

## Part 4

"It's not that kind of problem. If there's a fault in you, your attitude just now is not something praiseworthy at all. On top of that, please apologize right now if you don't want to pile another shame to the previous one"

Roana's saying that after letting out a big sigh.

Stead's body is trembling at those words as he creased his eyebrows in discomfort.

He appears to not be complying to Roana's words by becoming emotional.

Just like that, Stead is recalled of those times further powering his wrath.

"I already don't care about those matters. Please just pardon him for that much, Roana-sama"

Being unable to watch those two, Rio's admonished Roana.

"..... YOU....."

Stead was glaring with a piercing gaze at Rio. 又

Maybe he never felt a disgrace of being protected by the opponent to whom he didn't want to apologize to.

Even for Rio, though it doesn't mean that he can't guess his opponent's line of thought, before they noticed, Rio and co have gathered the attention of the people in their surrounding.

Their in full sight to the people who's looking at their direction with a truly interested expression.

Maybe making a big commotion more than this will put them in a slightly hard situation.

"That's so right. My apologies for waiting. My gratitude"

Maybe because she perceived the atmosphere of their surrounding, even Roana decided to stop any further action of her urging Stead to apologize.

Just like that, she's bowing deeply toward Rio again.

"I wonder what just happened ? "

There was people who's coming out of the crowd in their surrounding toward their place.

Gustave Euguno is giving his greeting to Rio and co as their leader.

"Ah, F-Fathe....."

The moment he discovered his own father, Stead expression is getting even worse.

"Would you tell me what just happened in this place, Roana-kun ? "

After giving a cold piercing glance to Stead whose expression became paler, duke Euguno was asking that question to Roana.

"Though I don't know the full detail of the situation, it seems that somehow Stead-kun caused trouble for him the last time they met. Despite my urging to apologizing to him, Stead-kun kept refusing....."

Roana's replying as if troubled by Stead's action.

"It's the matter in Almond restaurant. Your highness duke Euguno"

So, Liselotte told duke Euguno.

With that, maybe because he instantly understood the situation.

"I see. So it was about that. This is the fault of my stupid son. My apologies for what he said to Haruto-kun"

## Part 5

Duke Euguno was immediately apologizing to Rio.

"It's nothing, since I don't care about that anymore"

Though he replied with smile on his face, Rio's winced back deep in his mind to the unexpected development.

Though he honestly doesn't want to have anything to do with the people of Bertram kingdom ever again, he's experienced a series of meeting with the people of Bertram kingdom since a while ago.

Moreover, all of them is the big-shot people.

"Stead. Don't make me embarrassed. It was something that you must do. Apologize right now"

Without even looking at his own child, duke Euguno said that with a cold tone.

Stead body is trembling.

"I-I've troubled you sometime ago....."

A while later, Stead was muttering those words with a shrill voice.

"..... My deepest apology"

And then, after speaking words of apology with great difficulties, Stead is bowing deeply to him.

It's by no means in front of a few people in their surrounding.

Though Rio doesn't know and don't even care about Stead's personality, maybe it's a disgrace for him.

"Ye, yes. It's okay as long as you don't do such kind of action again with accordance to the contract"

Rio's gentle shaking his head while having a slightly cramped smile.

As expected, he came to feel pity to Stead whose figure is truly miserable right now.

"I felt that I want him to properly apologize to you. If it's good with you, I'll prepare a good place for him to apologize again"

On the side of his own son who's bowing at Rio, duke Euguno said those words while letting out an unfathomable smile which makes one wonder what he's thinking about.

"No, you don't need to do that. Since your highness is also busy himself"

Rio didn't accept that suggestion even if it's just a lip service.

Since he doesn't even know what will happen if he's entering an area which is prepared by his opponent.

Though Rio can't imagine that there might be a plan to get rid of Rio and the annoying contract which binds his son, or he might be trying to soliciting or using the basis in his connection to Liselotte, at any rate, his purpose might be not really to apologize.

If it's necessary aside, Rio didn't have that kind of adventurous spirit to the point of having a connection to them because the thrill of horror the more he was looking at it.

"Fumu. Well, it's because we're in the position to make an apology right. So I won't force you. I'm just coming out with that idea. By the way, it'll be the time of dance soon right. If it's okay with you, please come to dance with the daughter of our country later. Even those girl will be delighted if they can dance with a man of your caliber"

Without even tenaciously opposing his rejection, duke Euguno easily changed the topic.

Though Rio felt slightly anticlimactic, still there's no need to say troublesome words of rejection.

## Part 6

"Yeah, unfortunately, since I already gave my promise to dance with Liselotte-sama, I'll be delighted if I have the chance for that later"

Rio's replying that way since he don't mind it to that extent.

In regard to the dance setting of the evening party, the unmarried young man is not really admirable if they're participating in the dance event without inviting the girls.

Though it doesn't mean that it was absolute, at least they won't need to save their face to the surrounding if they're not dancing by themselves.

It's better if they can dance with two or three people.

But, despite not very interested himself, Rio's accepting duke Euguno invitation by treating it as a lip service.

"Ooh, I see. If that was the case, then it's a special chance. I shall introduce the daughter of our country"

Saying so, duke Euguno's throwing his line of sight to the back.

On that place is the daughters of the noble and the male noble who's following duke Euguno like remora.

With just how many nobles and acquaintances that he met today, with the self-introduction of the nobles is still going on forever.

Rio's sighing deep in his mind and then showing a smile which is not showing his inner feelings.

Liselotte who's beside him is also showing the same smile.

"Nice to meet you. My name is Elise from the house of earl Brandt"

"I'm Dorothea from the house of earl Albert"

Saying so, the noble daughters is introducing themselves one by one.

Their age is maybe around the same age as Rio and Liselotte.

Or not even "maybe", some of them is basically an old acquaintance of Rio

when he was still in royal academy.

There's no doubt, Elise and Dorothea and the others, according to Rio memory, they belong to the Roana faction.

With everyone of them dressed beautifully, despite they're showing modest elegance whether in their actions or words, their eyes are filled with curiosity.

"My deepest gratitude for the polite words. I definitely will commit everyone's name and appearance into my memories"

Rio's nodding lightly while showing a sociable smile.

He has become quite used to making himself look pleasant to others.

"Hahaha. I'm glad then. Haruto-kun is someone who you should paid close attention even in this evening party. Nothing is lost from remembering his face"

Despite saying that with joke-like tone, duke Euguno's eyes isn't laughing at all.

That was the eyes of someone who's gauging of how much utility value Rio has.

The noble daughters are laughing delightfully as they're nodding in agreement to duke Euguno's words.

"My face ? It must be a joke"

Rio asked duke Euguno as if surprised by it.

"What are you talking about. Even if it's just by calling you a partner of miss Liselotte you are already attracting much attention you know. Moreover, didn't you just say that you're a completely nameless person. The person who're not interested by that is an interesting person himself"

"..... I see. You might be able to say it that way, I see"

## Part 7

Rio agreed while showing a wry smile.

Jealousy, promotion, self-protection—— The nobles and the likes who are participating in this evening party is always keeping their eyes on the people of their surrounding who have more power than themselves.

Though the excessively self-conscious thing was something that he'll understand, maybe Rio's noticing that more than what he thought.

But then, since there's no meaning in currying a favor to him no matter how much he's paying attention, it's nothing but only a disadvantage\*—— [TLC\* : not too sure —もともと、いくら注目されたところで自分に取り入る意味など何もないのだから、ただの注目損にしかないのに]

He thinks of it as nothing but a farce as he's interacting with the nobles.

"Oops, it seems that it's about the time for dance"

Duke Euguno said that as he already estimated the time the performers is finishing their preparation in the venue.

"Liselotte-sama. It's a bit faster but, how about dancing with me for a song ?  
"

Rio's smiling while presenting his hand to Liselotte who's standing by his side.

"Yeah, of course you can"

Liselotte's nodding happily while answering his offering hand by seizing it.

"Well then, we'll excuse ourselves, your highness duke Euguno"

Liselotte turned toward duke Euguno and said those words.

"Yeah, let me see your dance from this place"

After finishing with their separation greeting with a light nod, the two of them then move toward the dance space in the middle of the venue while holding each others hand.

How many set of pair who'll come with the same timing is currently making a



preparation to dance.

"Hou, miss Liselotte is dancing too huh"

"The other party is that youth partner huh"

"This seems interesting. Let's see them for a while"

When they're looking at the dancing figure of Liselotte and Rio, the crowds of people was starting to leave to the vicinity of the dancing space.

Everyone is looking at them with a really interested face.

After they've arrived at the center space, the two of them are glued closely as if embracing at each other in order to dancing the dance.

"We're becoming the center of attention aren't we"

Rio's saying that while smiling wryly as he feels the line of sight which is pouring on them without reservation.

"Fufu, that must be it. Is it unpleasant being looked that way ? "

Liselotte's saying so while looking at Rio's face from the range in which she can feel his breath.

"Though I won't call it unpleasant, it feels itchy since I'm not used to it"

"You're feeling nervous then ? "

"It's because Liselotte-sama is my partner right. It's natural that I feel nervous you know"

"How unexpected. How should I say it, it's because I never think that Haruto-sama will feel nervous at all"

"If that was the case, maybe I'll be more skilled in expressing myself without using words in this evening party right"

## Part 8

They have that kind of conversation while the musical performance is starting.

Moreover, the two who's matching together is starting to dance.

"You're a good dancer aren't you"

Liselotte's praising Rio dance.

"It's definitely my partner is a good dancer too right"

"..... Truly skillful\*" [TL\* : this can also means as skillful in flattery]

Liselotte's showing a bashful face.

"Uhm, as I thought pairs of handsome-beauty truly make a picturesque scene only when they're dancing together"

"Nonono, it's become picturesque only because that youth is skillfully leading the dance right"

"Fumu, miss Liselotte's also perfectly matching the breathing of her partner you know"

Though it'll cause scorn-like evaluation if they're presenting a shameful dance in this place, the evaluation of their dance is the best.

"Aah, we're too late to start because of the prolonged greeting. And I've been painstakingly practicing my dance with Roana you know"

Hiroaki's also looking at them dancing along with the other audience.

He didn't even have the time for a short break since he must keep accompanying the nobles who keeps coming to give their greeting till just a moment ago.

When left in the environment in which he's not used to, a bit of stress and fatigue is starting to accumulate.

"There's still much more of them you know. Uhm, please dance with me when the music changes"

Cleverly guessing that Hiroaki's mood had become slightly dampened, Flora

who moved along with him said that by his side.

"Ou, that is so. And with Roana too. Uhm....."

Hiroaki's running his line of sight in the venue while nodding to her.

"Oh, there she is. Let's go over there, Flora"

A while after he found the one he's looking for, Hiroaki started to move his feet in a casual manner.

Somehow, Roana's looking at the dance along with the noble daughters of the same generation as her.

The noble daughters in that place is making a merry conversation which is filled with wicked conversation.

"Haruto-sama over there must be an excellent person right"

"Yeah, if we're going to be used as a political tool, it'll be better to approach that kind of generous young noble like him after all"

"His composed atmosphere is making you feel safe right. Having a composure is a good thing right"

It's as if they're commenting on the knight in the shining armor who's currently dancing a dance.

"You two, you're saying improper words you know"

Roana who's astonished by their conversation is not scolding them who's doing that kind of conversation on her side immediately and only ended up with cautioning them while sighing shortly.

"E~h, So Roana-sama also don't think nicely of Haruto-sama ? "

So, A certain noble daughter was asking with slightly sharp tone.

She's the noble daughter who came to give a greeting to Rio a while ago—  
Elise.

## Part 9

"..... I'm not judging a gentlemen just by their appearance"

Roana's giving a firm answer.

"He~, things like assets and status is certainly important but, there's nothing better than a nice appearance you know. You might even say that it won't be good unless the other party have both of them right ? "

"Though I won't deny it, please stop with chasing after your ideal. Since eventually, you can't attract the gentlemen who excel in their wealth or appearance"

"Didn't you unexpectedly keep staring at Haruto-sama since some time ago ? "

Elise's teasing her while letting out a wide grin.

"WHA, I'm not looking at him with that kind of intention ! "

Roana's panicking as her face flushed red.

"I know that. Your favourite is hero-sama, Haruto-sama is eye candy right. Your future is secured if you can marry hero-sama you know"

Dorothea supported Elise without holding back.

"Geez, I don't know anymore"

Roana was turning her face away while puffing her cheeks.

Despite saying that, her line of sight is unconsciously following after Rio.

"Yo, Roana. A~h, what's the matter, so you're looking at the dance of Liselotte and Haruto huh"

Hiroaki was coming to their location.

Roana's noticing the fact that she's glancing at Rio who's dancing in the center of the venue, her lips are unconsciously slightly pouting.

"Yeah, I think that their dancing is extremely skillful and elegance. They're a nice example even for Hiroaki-sama"

"A~h, that's so"

"The current musical performance is going to end soon. Please dance with me after you've danced with your highness princess Flora"

"Ou, Okay. But, what are you going to do while I'm dancing with Flora ? "

"I can't dance with the other gentlemen in the first turn except with Hiroaki-sama. I'll be waiting in this place"

Hiroaki's smiling in satisfaction with that words.

"Yeah, I see so that is. Fine then. Well then, I'll try to invite Liselotte afterward"

"In that case, please call her after my turn. Since the musical performance just ended, I'll see you later then"

"Yeah, best regards. Let's go, Flora"

Hiroaki was leaving for the sake of dancing bringing along Flora with him after leaving those words.

After seeing them off, Roana is letting out a sigh of relief while walking toward the location of Liselotte and Rio who's just coming back from the center of the dance space.

"Haruto-san, Liselotte-san. Thank you very much for today. Your dance is wonderful you know"

"Ara, Thank you very much, Roana-san."

## Part 10

Liselotte told her gratitude with a smile on her face.

Rio's also saying his gratitude with a light nod.

When Roana's smiling as if slightly troubled about something,

"The truth is, Hiroaki-sama saying that he definitely want to dance for one tune with Liselotte-sama, though I think that a woman of your caliber should be busy with accompanying the other gentlemen, would you be willing to become his dancing partner later ? "

She's asking while facing at Liselotte.

"Yeah, of course I will. It's my honour to be granted with a honor to dance with hero-sama"

Liselotte is laughing while nodding at her.

"Thank you very much. Please let me say my gratitude in place of Hiroaki-sama"

Roana was bowing back at her.

"Well then, it's impossible for me to always monopolize Liselotte-sama right. In that case, I'll be moving alone for a while"

Rio who was watching their conversation said that.

When it comes to this time slot where the dance also started, the number of the people starting to move separately with the partner they're coming together with is also increasing.

Soon will be the suitable time for Rio to move separately from Liselotte.

"That's not true. Since I can spend enjoyable time in evening party that I never felt before is thanks to Haruto-sama"

"I've used up my fortune to be born as a man by receiving that words"

Rio's stated his gratitude while smiling lightly.

"Well then, let's meet again later. Since I've prepared the coach to go back"

"Yes, my gratitude. See you again"

After leaving that words, Rio left Liselotte.

"Ah, Haruto-sama"

"Who you might be greeting after this ? "

He keeps hearing this kind of whispering of the noble daughters, When he's walking through the hustle bustle of the venue.

It seems Rio face was extremely recognized in this evening party.

Now is the time slot to relax by dancing, since no one is applying for a dance in his current situation, walking alone aimlessly like this is also not uncomfortable at all.

But then, he couldn't get used to a request for dancing which is coming from an unknown woman.

Since the second tune of the dance have begun, maybe it's better to gain some time by pretending to look at the dancing.

When he thinks so,

"Uhm, Haruto-sama"

Someone was calling to Rio.

It was the noble daughter who was moving along with duke Euguno a while ago.

"Yes, what do you wish to ask ? "

## Part 11

Rio responded with an insincere smile.

"Uhm, since we were only doing a self-introduction a while ago, I want to chat with Haruto-sama for a while longer"

"You're Elise Brandt right. It's my honor to have someone like you talking to someone like me"

"Well, it's because you remember my name right. Thank you very much"

Elise's happily saying her gratitude.

"Yeah, it's because you introduced yourself just a while ago right"

"Ara, it's just Elise, so sly"

The one who said those words while pouting her lips is the noble daughter who stood beside Elise.

"Of course I remember your name too you know. Princess Dorothea Albert"

Rio said Dorothea's name while smiling as if being troubled with her.

"Well, don't tell that you remember the name of all people you meet"

"No, well though it's impossible to remember the name of the people you meet today, I'm doing my best to remember the name of everyone who gave a strong impression"

"Ara, I'm anxious in what *"kind of impression is left"* by us"

"It's because everyone is so beautiful"

Rio answered while smiling wryly.

"Well, it's a flattery right. Could it be that you're accustomed with woman ? "

The noble daughters are getting lively with Dorothea and Elise at the top list.

Maybe they're not dissatisfied at all with being praised as beautiful.

But, Rio couldn't said it.



The fact that Elise and Dorothea is the former classmate who went to the royal academy along with Rio long time ago, thus he recalled about them when he heard their name and saw their face.

Even more so, it's because Elise was secretly courting him when he's in royal academy.

Though it then comes to her having a hand in spreading a bad rumor when he indirectly gives a cold face to her.

"There's no such thing you know. Though I'm ashamed for saying this, being surrounded by many girls like this is the first time for me. So I'm a bit nervous right now"

That's true, he's too nervous to not let them to find his origin by chance.

Rio was showing a slightly cramped smile while sweating a cold sweat inside.

He wants to take some distance with these noble girls in this place in one way or another.

Just when he thinks so,

"I've finally found you. Haruto-san..... Wasn't it"

Suddenly, someone is calling Rio from behind.

When he's turning around, a girl is standing at that place.

Pure white dress which wrapping on her body body is fastened with pin on her back, she was looking at Rio with a slightly belligerent look.

Rio's also bravely staring back at her.

"You definitely will not unsatisfied to dance for a tune with me aren't you ? "

Her bell-like voice is resounding.

Looking at her with slightly widened eyes in surprise, Rio was nodding at her while smiling broadly.

"..... Yeah, with pleasure. Satsuki-sama"

Answering that way, Rio was respectfully offering his hand toward Sumeragi Satsuki— The person who's his reason for coming to this evening party.

---



# Chapter 94: Confidential Discussion

## Part 1

Satsuki, while looking at the hand Rio is offering, is seizing his hand.

The noble girls of Bertram kingdom including Dorothea were looking at their exchange with slightly dumbfounded expression.

"Excuse me"

When he's muttering those words to Satsuki, Rio is suddenly turning around to face the noble girls.

"My deepest apology, everyone. Since I received an invitation from hero-sama, I decided to become her partner for a dance . Though it's truly regrettable for me to leave your side, please excuse my discourtesy" [ED: Read TL note from last chapter]

Rio's telling those noble girls while wearing troubling-like smile.

And then, the noble girls finally snapped out of their daze.

"Y-You can't expect to refusing it if it's a direct invitation from hero-sama, can you"

Elise replies with awkward smile.

She was the one who greeted Rio earlier.

Certainly, the status of Satsuki who's the hero is above everyone of them.

But still, it's not something amusing for the girls when someone is coming and snatching the man they're aiming at.

Since If things go naturally as it is, someone of them might be dancing with Rio.

Or rather, approaching Rio was also those girls objective.

But, while it might be true, as ladies, you couldn't expect them to scold Satsuki in public.

"O-Okay, I still want to chat with Haruto-sama but, since it's come to this"

Dorothea also having a cramped smile while agreeing to Elise.

The other noble girls is also giving similar responses.

"I feel really happy to be able receiving such words. If there's a chance again later, please allow me to say my apology to everyone"

"Yeah, of course"

The noble girls are throwing an appropriate answer for Rio words.

Though those words might be just a lip service, it's something for raising their honor if they're making an appropriate response. [TL : It's pain in the ass for me to translate such ambiguous wording]

For arguments sake, it might be incurring displeasure of those noble girls if he just leave them without any kind of following. [TL : SO you learn from your previous lesson huh(when he's incurring the jealousy of both male camp and female camp of noble during royal academy era)]

And Satsuki who's the culprit is— —

"My deepest apology. There was something I wished to tell him for a little while"

Saying so, Satsuki also apologized using proper gestures and expression.

"Well, regarding that. Please don't mind about us. Since we'll be willingly pulling back if hero-sama wishes for it"

"Thank you very much"

Satsuki left that place along with Rio after saying her gratitude to those noble girls.

The two of them are walking side-by-side.

This distance is close enough so that they can have a secret conversation.

"Thank you very much for calling me. So, you managed to successfully escape from that crowd alone huh ? "

## Part 2

So, Rio successfully said those words which can only be heard by Satsuki since their surroundings are quite loud.

"You're right. It was hard, indeed. To sneak here by myself"

"Must be so, right"

Rio's agreeing while showing a wry smile.

Just like that, they're gathering the looks of the surrounding people just by walking side by side with just the two of them.

If she, the guest of honor, is walking alone, she definitely will be greeted in the place she goes to.

Rejecting all of that hospitality might become a considerably grave matter.

"My apologize for troubling you. Since I don't wish for this conversation to be heard by the people in that place"

"Yeah, I understand that. That's why I came to you as you wished. Since I was quite surprised with what you did. Now, please tell me. Miharu-cha——"

Just when Satsuki was about to ask something.

"P-Please wait a minute ! Satsuki ! "

Saying that while walking toward the dance space in the center of the hall, a man has come to stop Satsuki.

"They found us huh"

Satsuki's murmured while sighing.

Her voice is filled with slightly troubled emotion.

"What's matter ? Michael"

Satsuki's turning around to ask the owner of that voice.

Standing in there is a tall youth with air of a gentleman.

If Rio isn't mistaken, he was amongst the royalties who he greeted sometimes

ago.

He certainly is a man who has the right to stand beside Satsuki.

His is a bit older than Rio and Satsuki.

His name is Michael Galwark, the genuine prince of Galwark kingdom.

"Don't *"what's matter"* me. It's because you suddenly disappeared the moment I took my eyes from you. I'm worried you know. I can't let you go missing"

Michael's speaking to Satsuki.

"It can't be helped you know. Who do you think I'm ? "

Satsuki's replied with displeased tone.

"For you to say something like that, weren't you lost in the castle once before. When you were arbitrarily trying to exploring the castle"

"That was only when I just come to this world, wasn't it"

Satsuki's sighing a little.

"Well then, I'll be going soon if you have no other business though ? "

"Going to where..... ? "

"After all, I'm dancing with this person"

Satsuki was looking at Rio while smiling a sweet smile as if being fascinated.

# Part 3

"Dance..... ? With..... This man ? "

Michael's staring at Rio's face with dumbfounded expression.

"Yeah, that's right"

Satsuki's nonchalantly affirming his question.

"W-What have you just said. Since you're a hero, you can't be so careless when choosing your first dancing partner....."

....."

"Ara, I wonder why he's no good ? I think that he's quite good looking though" [TL : sushh, "she's a predator"]

Saying so, Satsuki's getting one step closer to Rio while showing an impish face.

Their shoulders coming so close to the point of almost touching.

"Na~~....."

Michael's eyes are opened wide.

And then, he's immediately sending a piercing glance at Rio.

"You..... Are the person who was brought as a partner by Liselotte, aren't you"

It a little unexpected that Michael recalls about Rio.

"Yes. My name is Haruto"

Rio's stated his name while giving a wry smile.

He's sighing inside with this slightly troublesome.

"He's okay with Liselotte, and the same with Satsuki, is this kind of a man really so nice looking ? "

Michael's muttering with sullen expression.

It doesn't mean that Michael is what you call ugly.

Or rather, you can say that he has well ordered features that you could call perfect.

His semi-blonde hair which is stretched in wavy style on both sides of his face is attracting the looks of many girls.

But, on close inspection, when comparing his body closely with Rio it might gave slightly poor image as Rio has the slender and well-proportioned one.

Despite there really being no need for training the royalties, it can't be helped that he's lacking in muscularity.

"I mean, his face is slightly resembling the people of my motherland. I've said it right. I've say that I want to go back to my world. Which means that I won't miss even a trivial hint if it's for that sake. Your side said that you'll give your cooperation to help me get back to my original world, right ? "

Satsuki told him so while a serious expression floated on her face just in that moment.

"T-That is..... B-But, just because you say that his face is similar, it doesn't mean that it'll become a hint to returning to your original world....."

Michael's replying with pressuring appearance.

"Ara, there's a possibility that his distant ancestor might be someone from my original world"

"I-Is that so ? "



## Part 4

Michael asked Rio.

"I don't know the details regarding my lineage. But, since hero-sama's seemingly taking an interest in my hometown, I'm thinking of telling her as much as I know"

Rio's telling him in composed manner while matching what he said with Satsuki story.

"!!!..... E-Even so, there's no need to dance to do that, right ? I mean you can make other arrangement for this....."

Though he was at loss for words for a moment, nevertheless, Michael's clinging persistently on them.

Somehow, it seems that he's unable to accept the fact that Satsuki's dancing with Rio first.

Thereupon, in that place,

"Ara, isn't that fine then. Onii-sama. I'm fine with hero-sama's dancing a dance with that gentleman you know"

A girl appeared and said those words to Michael.

She's around as old as Rio, or just slightly younger.

She has an extremely lovely appearance.

Her shoulder length blonde hair which overlapped with madder red is so brilliant, her style is well arranged even from the top of her lovely frilly dress\*.

[TLC\* : 茜色のかかったセミロングのブロンドヘアは鮮やかで、フリルの付いた可愛いドレスの上からでもスタイルが整っているのがわかる。]

"C-Charlotte..... Even you....."

Michael was looking at the girl called Charlotte with bewildered expression.

"It's because hero-sama is not your thing, nor she's your fiancée, onii-sama. You can't bind her, doing such unreasonable things will also stress hero-sama"

Charlotte's skillfully covering for Satsuki.

"That's right. I'm giving my agreement to become a hero but, I don't remember giving my agreement to have my movement restricted for anything unreasonable"

And so, Satsuki was taking an advantage of that situation.

"GUH..... But, I'm just thinking for your sake....."

"She didn't even have any contact with nothing but just some people during this several months when she's been secluded in the royal castle. Don't you think that having a contact with another person will become a nice stimulus for hero-sama ? "

Charlotte's going by logic.

She's saying that to this point since there's no allies in their vicinity, It'll look bad if he keeps on clinging to Satsuki like he has for now.

Maybe because Michael felt so.

"..... Understood. I'll let you to dance with Satsuki"

He's agreeing reluctantly.

Charlotte's smiling a delightful smile and then,

"Well, am I not good enough for onii-sama ! Though it's just as substitute, please dance with me, onii-sama"

## Part 5

She's saying so while clinging on Michael's arm with a playful atmosphere.

"Charlotte..... Understood, well then, shall we have a dance"

After breathing lightly as if to say "*It can't be helped then*", Michael finally said those words.

And Charlotte is replying with "Thank you very much ! ".

"Thank you, Sharl-chan"

Satsuki told her gratitude to Charlotte with whispering voice while winking at her with one of her eyes.

"No, it's nothing. He's a wonderful gentleman isn't he. Please enjoy your dance"

Charlotte's replied while sending a fleeting gaze at Rio.

"It's not like that though"

Satsuki's smiling wryly as if being troubled by her statement.

"Well then, let's go at once, Onii-sama ! "

Charlotte was walking at brisk step after seizing Michael's arms with a wide smile on her face.

"Are you okay with that ? "

Rio's asked Satsuki while watching those two retreating figure.

"About what ? "

"Nothing, maybe it's better for you to be free from obstacles like invitations since he is some kind of a royalty"

"It's okay. Since I've no plans to deteriorate our relationship with unnecessary hard-heartedness, and I want to have a chat with you more than I want to accompany him right now"

Satsuki's replying with honest expression.

Thus, despite being curious about Rio's story, she did have her reasons.

yes, Rio used spirit arts on Satsuki when they were sharing a handshake sometimes ago.

That was thought type of art of conversation called conveying the voice of his heart to the other party.

It doesn't mean that they can do bi-directional conversation too when separated in fixed distance like his case with Aisia who's tied to him by spirit contract.

There's an absolute need for directly touching the other party, and as long as the other party is unable to use spirit arts, it would be nothing but just like one-way communication.

Therefore, though there's limitation for using it, it's a useful spirit arts for a confidential confersation.

"There's a lot of things that I want to ask but, let me start by asking this. The matter about you taking care Miharuchan and co..... Is that true ? "

Satsuki's asking that while peeking at Rio face.

She won't miss any signs of lying.

He can feel this kind of strong will from her.

"Yeah, it's true"

Rio's staring back into Satsuki eyes.

Their eyes are meeting in the air.

## Part 6

"Are they safe ? "

"Of course they're safe. They're living full of spirit in this world even at this moment"

Satsuki squinted her eyes when Rio gave that kind of reply to her.

"Say, me believing your story is based on nothing but the fact that you, know the full name of Miharu-chan and co. That's why I have no choice but to trust you. But, I can't do something like blindly trusting your words without even knowing all the details about you"

"I see. It's as you say"

Rio's saying an appropriate response while nodding deeply.

"If so, will you let me to hear of your purpose and what were you aiming with this kind of contact with me in the beginning ? And, why're you trying to let me meet Miharu-chan and co ? "

Satsuki's asked with composed tone.

"Though I don't mind to answer that, that's right——"

Rio's showing a gesture of pondering lightly.

Even if she asks whether he has any kind of goals, Rio's taking this action for nothing more than for the sake of Miharu and co.

Currently, Satsuki's trying to probe for Rio's goal.

What sort of things must he tell so she would believe him when he conveyed that to her.

Though he's pondering about it, maybe it's better for him to conveying the truth as it is than lining up words.

"It's because Miharu-san and co really want to meet..... You that is. Nothing to do with my own goals....."

Was Rio reply after pondering about it for a while.

"Because Miharu-chan and co want to meet me you say ? "

"Yes"

Rio's replying right away.

(Does that mean he's acting completely from his goodwill ? Well, I think such reason is completely impossible but.....)

After looking at him to the very best of her ability, Satsuki doesn't think that he's lying.

But, he really might not be somewhat of a good person.

Satsuki also fully understands her value as a hero.

Ever since she come to this world, even in this evening party, various kind of people have approached her to abuse her status.

Maybe for that reason, Satsuki has become slightly suspicious of him without the she herself noticing it.

So that means, by participating in this evening party, the youth before her also has some sort of influence.

Is so, *"is this man really approaching me out of good will and without caring about the risks ?"*. [ED: It is "Calculation" in Japanese but what he is calculating over is whether it's worth the risk.]

Maybe he really is moving around and sparing no effort working hard for the sake of fellow friends who have separated.

She's noticing as if she's overlooking for some kind of precondition.

For the sake of making sure of that——,

## Part 7

"Fu~hn, I see....."

Satsuki's suddenly approached Rio face.

And then asking.

"..... Only that ? "

And.

"Yup, it's only that"

Rio's nodding deeply.

After that, Rio was taking a brief look at his surrounding.

"By the way——"

".....What ? "

Satsuki's tilting her head in a lovely gesture while replying to him.

"It seems we're gathering a bit attention from our surroundings. Maybe we should distance ourselves"

Rio said that while smiling as if slightly bewildered.

Because Satsuki's looking at Rio face from close by, their faces are quite close right now.

They're glued together to the point of making one feel that they might be kissing in the next moment.

"Na~~....."

Even while being dumbfounded, Satsuki's looking at her surroundings in panic.

Because she was focusing all of her attention on Rio, it seems that she somehow neglected her surroundings.

Being aware that many people in their surroundings are sending inquisitive gazes toward them, Satsuki's face is blushing in a surprising way.

As a strong embarrassment is poking through her entire body, Satsuki's immediately taking one step away from Rio.

Rio who's looking at her appearance was laughing as if slightly amused by her.

"..... What ? "

Satsuki's glaring at Rio with scornful eyes.

"Ehm, it seems that the next tune of musical performance is about to start soon but, shouldn't we go there ? "

Rio's proposed after clearing his throat.

"..... That's right"

When she's looking away from Rio who give slightly blunt reply, Satsuki was walking at brisk step toward the dance plaza.



The people who're going to dance during the next tune are on stand by on the right side of the dance plaza in the middle of the hall.

Roana and Liselotte were in there too.

When Satsuki's going there to stand by along with Rio, the people in here quickly turn noisy.



## Part 8

"It seems they have noticed but, I have to give my gratitude to you since this brief moment without getting greeted by anyone is really comforting, isn't it. I don't want to receiving a greeting from anyone right now, so let's just keep pretending that we are having an enjoyable conversation while laughing on occasion"

Satsuki's muttering with tired face due to the looks which rudely poured on her.

Though they have taken some distance from the surrounding, they have no knowledge of when will the people who I yet to give their greeting to Satsuki will appear.

Today main guest is Satsuki, so it can't be helped and not an exaggeration to say that every participant in this evening party is wanting to make small talk with Satsuki.

"Yeah. That's right. By the way, there's something that I want to ask, is that okay ? "

"Uhm, I don't mind....."

"I'm pondering about what made Satsuki-san to want to become a hero. Would I be able to hear it ? "

Maybe Rio's trying to guess what Satsuki will be trying to do in this world.

Though it's hard to think about it just from the impression about her tale so far and the image of her personality which he heard from Miharuru, Satsuki definitely isn't limiting nor is she hiding a common desire like wanting to adventure and have things such as fame and fortune as a hero.

If for example she has those kind of wishes, Miharuru and co's value will be useful for having a vast amount of magical power.

Despite not wanting to attract too much suspicion, Rio wanted to make sure whether there's even a sign of Satsuki wanting to make use of Miharuru and co.

"..... It's not like I want to become something like a hero. I didn't even wish to become one"

Satsuki said those words while showing a serious expression on her face.

"Well then..... Why did you become one ? "

"..... I, you see, I just want to go back to earth. My family is important to me, so are my friends, and there's so many things which I left undone. Suddenly being summoned to this world is just incomprehensible, there are no people who I know in my surroundings, the people whose faces I don't know, everyone is telling about me being a hero....."

After speaking that much, Satsuki's sighing lightly.

"Around the time I first came to this world. I, couldn't accept what happened to me. I requested the royalties to send me back to my original world right away after I received a brief explanation about the circumstances but, they said that there no known method..... I was embarrassing myself while speaking with them but, even after a while, it was no use. I was staying in the room of the royal palace which was given to me, and after a short while, I became really suspicious that the people of the castle might know a way to return me so I'm secretly walking around the castle to investigate that" [ED: CoolStoryBob]

Maybe it because of recalling those times, but Satsuki's tightly clenching her teeth.

When thinking about the situation she is placed in, maybe the day were painful in a way which she couldn't express with just words.

It's different from Miharu and co who were transferred along with other people, because Satsuki truly was alone.

"But, I wonder what becomes of these days. Even tho I'm still learning, continuously wasting time like this is really scary. Say, at this rate, won't I become a granny in this world if time keeps passing by like this..... And then, I wonder if it's by that point that I'm finally facing forward and saying 『I can't stand here without doing something !']. I was thinking about looking for a method to return to earth. Although in the end everything has been a waste, because it was really vexing giving up like that without even doing anything.

But, I don't have the knowledge to do something alone, do I? That's why I thought about borrowing the power of this country. Since fortunately the other party wants to use me as a hero, therefore, in exchange for becoming a hero, I will receive their help for the sake of returning to my original world. I wonder if you feel this way. That's the reason for me to become a hero"

## Part 9

Saying that, Satsuki's showing a frail smile to Rio.

That's an extremely brave act, and yet her smile was extremely transient.

"..... I'm sorry. I just asking about a bitter story"

"It's okay, it's nothing at all. You're trying to test me, aren't you, if it is okay to let the current me meet Miharu-chan and co ? Somehow, you can't place your trust in me, so we're about equal in this regard, aren't we. With that question just now, I somehow understood that you really are worrying about Miharu-chan and co"

Rio was staring at her for a while after hearing her question.

Surprisingly, it seems that Satsuki's seeing through Rio's intention.

It seems that she's more or less possessing an excellent insight.

"Then, how you think I wonder ? The result of your test. Have I passed your test ? "

Satsuki's staring intently at Rio face.

Rio's floating a smile on his face.

"..... Yeah, I'll let you to meet Miharu-san and co"

Was his answer.

"It seems the next dance is about to begin soon. Shall we continue our conversation while dancing"

Rio said that after sending a fleeting glance at the dancing hall.

And then, he presented his hand to Satsuki.

"I see. I more or less have the experience of ballroom dance in my original world but, the step of the dance of this world is marvelously different. May I receive your guidance, O gentleman ? "

After saying that and seizing Rio's hand, Satsuki was smiling lightly as if enjoying it.

"Yes, with pleasure. My lady"

Rio's also nodding while smiling widely.

Thereupon, this time, the sound of applause is reverberated in the hall.

It seems that Flora had little mistakes but, there's admiration to her and Hiroaki who finished their dance.

Many people in the venue's seem to have noticed them.

But, the people who've been waiting for a chance to dance on the stand by place including Liselotte were carefully assessing the situation of Satsuki and Rio much more than there were of Flora and Hiroaki.



"A~h, both of you. If it's okay with you, won't you dance with me? "

Hiroaki's returned to the waiting place along with Flora in good mood.

Just like that, he's applying for a dance to Roana and Liselotte.

"Yes, I was waiting for Hiroaki-sama with Roana-san for this sake"

"Yeah, no matter how much the two of us want it, for the two of us to be dancing at the same time with Hiroaki-sama is impossible. It can't be helped since you only have one body. Please come and dance along with Liselotte-sama first"

## Part 10

Roana who smiling politely when giving the first turn to Liselotte.

"That's right. Well then, let's dance, Liselotte"

"Yes. Well then, I shall accept that offer. Excuse me then"

Liselotte's nodded while smiling widely.

Rio and Satsuki's happen to be passing by that place.

"Uhn, Satsuki and..... Haruto, isn't it. Yoo"

Hiroaki's called to them.

"With this, everyone is going together"

Hiroaki's figure who was waiting upon by three beautiful high-ranked noble girls to choose is expecially more conspicuous than that of Rio and Satsuki.

When those four entered Rio field of vision, he greeted them with instantaneous smile.

Satsuki's also nodding with forced smile floating on her face.

When he see the figure of Rio taking Satsuki hand as if leading her, Hiroaki is sniffed with "fuhn".

"Hee, Satsuki after Liselotte huh. Your relationship doesn't look very good. It appears that guy's a lady killer. Right, Liselotte"

Hiroaki saying that with strangely disgusted smile.

"E, A, Yes. Uhm..... Ahaha"

Liselotte's agreeing while smiling wryly as if troubled by it.

When her eyes met with Rio's, Liselotte was bowing lightly without minding her surrounding while moving her mouth to say "I'm sorry".

Rio's nodding back with a smile.

"But, don't mind nameless guy who's standing out beyond his position. There's this kind of proverb in my world. It say, "Hammering the nails that are

sticking out". It'll stink if you're going too far" [TL : I can't believe he said this this to a former liberal arts college student]

Hiroaki's saying that while lightly shrugging his shoulder.

"My deepest gratitude for your warning. This humble self learnt something great because of this one inexperienced act"

Rio's bowing deeply while giving a sociable smile after answering that.

Despite speaking with extremely condescending attitude, Rio can't understand whether he give a plain advice with good intention, or is he just being sarcastic on purpose.

But, he was being poured with scorn and terrible sarcasm by the young noble back in the royal academy.

Because of that, even if Hiroaki's saying those words with sarcasm, it would be too little to even scratch Rio's feelings.

"Ah, be careful. Yosh, shall we dance then. Liselotte"

After saying that, Hiroaki's moved his hand around Liselotte shoulder.

"Uhm, yes. With pleasure"

## Part 11

Despite her body being slightly stiff, Liselotte's nodding with beautiful smile.

Hiroaki's sending a fleeting gaze toward Rio's face while he's leaving, then turned his body and revealed a smile with "humph".

Just like that, they're walking together toward the dance hall to have a dance

Thereupon, a muttering as if displeased is resounded on Rio side.

"What is, that ? He's too cocky. Has suddenly getting the position of a hero made him that splendid ? "

Maybe because she feels something in Hiroaki attitude, Satsuki's glaring at his back.

Though at first she was watching Hiroaki's speech with stunned expression, it seems anger's gradually seething in her heart.

"I'm sorry"

Roana's bowing deeply while saying so.

When she's changing her attention to Flora who's standing awkwardly as it is,

"Flora-sama, won't you want to see Hiroaki-sama's dance with us ? "

Roana has invited Flora.

"Ah, yes. Uhm....."

Despite nodding, Flora was hesitating whether she should leave this place.

Just like that, when her eyes were wandering between Rio and Roana,

"M-My apologize. It would hurt your feelings, right ? For some reason, hero-sama is tired due to his inexperience in evening parties....."

Soon, she's bowed to Rio as if determined to do that.

"It's nothing, I think Flora-sama isn't the one who has to apologize though"

Satsuki's replying while pursing her lips.



"Au. I-I'm sorry. Uhm....."

Flora is trembling while she's curling herself as if her body is withered.

"I say, Flora-sama has no need to apologizing"

Now, Satsuki said that while smiling wryly to Flora.

During that Rio's looking at Flora condition,

(The timid and clumsy parts of her didn't change after all this time huh)

He heartily thought so.

In the first place, a royalty shouldn't that easily apologize to another person.

Even if saying the words of apology, it's better if she shows a self-important attitude as if not minding it or feeling it's hard to do.

Maybe Flora's just too kind as a royalty.

Rio thought so.

Nonetheless, he had no intentions of conveying that to her.

But, seeing that Flora's become the center of attention of the surrounding people who see her withered figure apologizing in front of Rio and Satsuki.

It seems that having found that it's difficult to interpose the words to pierce this silence with her being a retainer, feeling that the state became slightly uneasy even from Roana. [Alt TL: Roana in her position as retainer finds it difficult to break this situation ]

Rio has no choice but to devise a plan to control the situation as the one who she apologized to.

Rio's sighing lightly and then,

## Part 12

"Please stop it. If you make Her highness Princess Flora do something like that, it will result in a situation just like Hiroaki-sama warned of\*. Please don't worry about it. Please look at the dance of Hiroaki-sama along with Roana-sama"[TL\* : Fixed, courtesy to kittenbitten-san from NU]

He kneeled respectfully as he say that.

"Y-Yes..... Thank you very much"

Flora's telling her gratitude with downhearted face.

"Well then, Flora-sama. Please come here"

Being invited clearly by Roana this time around, Flora's left him with slow steps.

Just when they're about to leave, Roana's bend her body lightly toward Rio.

"We're going too, Haruto-kun. It seems that the dancing has started"

Satsuki's said that after sighing lightly as if to change her feelings.

# Chapter 95: The Interstice of Ethic<sup>[1]</sup>

## Part 1

An elegant music was being played in the hall that had become the venue of the evening party.

There are many men and women who are forming pairs to dance on the dancing hall.

With exception of Satsuki and Rio or, Hiroaki and Liselotte, there was the figure of Charlotte and Christhardt, the royalty of Galwark kingdom, amongst them.

Maybe because everybody should be paying attention, quite a large number of people are watching the dance.

Rio and Satsuki are mutually and softly overlapping their hands, and then leaning closer till they could feel each other breath.

"Which reminds me, I haven't confirmed Satsuki-san's determination, have I. You want to meet Miharu-san and co too. Am I not mistaken ? "

Rio muttered those words lightly, all while performing an elegant dance step on top of it.

"..... That's right. I want to meet them if only I could"

Satsuki's replying with slightly gloomy expression.

"If that's the case, then the conversation couldn't be more simple. Let's talk about the plan for that"

Rio's mouth said those words lightly.

Thereupon, Satsuki was squinting her eyes.

"It's easy for me to say it but, with my current standing, you should have understood it right ? "

"Yeah, you've been living in the royal castle as a hero. Though the freedom of

your choices is probably respected as much as possible, you're definitely being monitored in case you try to do something. This is your situation, right ? "

Rio's shrugging his shoulder lightly while answering that.

"..... That's right. In that case, may I hear what kind of plan do you have in your mind ? "

"Well. If you say that you want to meet with Miharu-san and co, the country will definitely give their permission for your reunion but....."

After saying that Rio stops speaking, and color of disappointment floats onto Satsuki's face.

Rio's smiling gently and,

"But, it seems that somehow Satsuki-san hates that idea right ? The truth is, I also disagree with it. You should feel anxious about the fact that Miharu-san and co will become a political bargaining tool, right ? "

So, he asked as if he could see through the inside of Satsuki's heart.

His expression is calm in some respect.

"It's indeed the truth, right. That's why, I wonder why're you doing it this way by planning to come in contact with me alone ? But..... If you've understood that far, you should have understood that it's very difficult for me and Miharu-chan and co to meet right ? "

Satsuki's showing an expression that's mixed between suspicion and puzzlement.

In that moment, Rio felt that he's negotiating Satsuki with Miharu and co as a bargaining chip.

For example, if it comes to the protection for Miharu and co in Galwark kingdom, Rio will become a benefactor who's protected the friends of Satsuki who's a hero.

If that's the case, Rio might be able to climb the ladder of social status using those achievements.

Maybe Rio's hidden agenda is to climb the ladder of social status by using

Miharu and co.

Despite just for a moment, Satsuki has that kind of suspicion but, as expected, Rio's also rejecting the idea of getting Miharu and co to be involved in the political strife of the country.

That is based on the circumstantial evidence of their conversation but, whether or not he's gonna obediently follow his plan is another story.

Satsuki can't read all of Rio's thoughts and it would be no joke to just fully believe him and later be deceived\*. [TL\* : Courtesy to kittenbitten-san from NU]

But it was also true that if Satsuki didn't take the first step herself, she wouldn't be able to get any information on Miharu and the others\*. [TL\* : Courtesy to kittenbitten-san from NU]

## Part 2

"Yeah, of course. Since there's not that much time left, I'll say it briefly. When you said that you want to avoid meeting them up front, that means there's nothing but one method left"

Saying so, Rio's wrapping his right hand around Satsuki's back, and lightly pulling that slim waist.

And then, whispering close to her ears.

"Let's hide it from the country and do it in secret"

Satsuki eyes are opened wide.

Rio's words are resounding so many times inside her brain.

"Secret meeting..... Are you really going that far ? Even as a joke, currently I'm living in the royal castle you know ? Despite of that, it's something similar to keeping watch on me in the castle, so something like secret meeting is impossible"

Satsuki's refusing while slightly rising her voice.

"I don't have any plans to let you meet in the castle you know. I'm thinking about helping Satsuki-san slip out from the castle"

"Slipping out from the castle you say..... How are you going to do that ? "

"That's depending on the current monitoring system toward Satsuki-san. I will ask this but, is Satsuki-san being monitored inside your room until sleeping ? "

Satsuki's showed a pensive expression to Rio question.

"..... I haven't thought about it like that but, it's not..... I think. There were times when even I was awake till late at night without sleeping a few times but, at least no one has ever come to visit me when I'm sleeping. I'm sure that they're not going so far as looking inside"

Satsuki's replying after a slight hesitation.

"In that case, the right time is at the middle of the night, isn't it"

Rio replied in a flash.

"That is, maybe it'll be late at night if it's the time to slip out but..... That's impossible you know. Certainly, no one will be coming to monitor someone who's sleeping if it's in the middle of the night but, there's guards outside of the room, and then there's security soldier swarming around the inside of the castle you know ? "

Satsuki's telling him that half by reflex.

"Of course. That's something that I'm fully aware you know"

Satsuki's telling the risk that will also be shared by Rio, never by any means is she making light of it.

No matter how what she does with Rio, a raid toward a royal castle is not something she wants to perform just because of a simple decision.

There's a need to be overly vigilant on the surroundings when infiltrating.

And, from the fact that even amongst humans, there are people who have high perception of magical power, there's a fear that those people will be detecting unusual phenomenon due to the remnant of magical power that's drifting in the air when he's using spirit arts for secret business.

If they're noticing the unusual phenomenon, it'll certainly turn into an uproar.

Though escaping might not be that hard even when it turned into an uproar, instead, the plan to meet Satsuki will be increasing in difficulty.

"But, Let me somehow handle that point. This is what you call "entering a tiger den" right"

"S-Somehow handle it you say....."

## Part 3

Satsuki is wishing that she could hold her head.

While he was saying something like that so easily, she also lost her will to offer further opinion.

Or rather, the development of their conversation is too fast paced, her processing speed is unable to catch up with it.

"The time is also limited, may you tell me the position of your room ? Since I'll come to visit you tonight when the full moon is hanging on the southern sky"

Satsuki slightly hesitated due to the paralysis in her train of thought to the question that was thrown at her.

Though there's many things she wants to ask regarding a certain invasion plan in Rio's mind moreover so is regarding Miharu and co.

Everything that she wants to ask is too much to answer knowing the remaining time left.

After the dance has finished, she won't be able to have such a long drawn conversation alone with Rio.

Since it'll be stirring the displeasure from the surroundings if she does so.

"..... If you're going that far, then there's four spires in the four directions of the royal castle, right ? My room is on the top floor of the east one"

At the end of her internal discord, Satsuki decided to tell Rio the location of her own room.

Though she has no knowledge about what kind of method he'll be using to invade the castle, it's hard to fight against the charm of gaining information about Miharu and the others.

Satsuki's in the situation where she has no knowledge about Rio's identity yet, though there's nothing that can make her trust his words in this short amount of time, at least from the conversation this far, she can see that Rio's an intellectual person.



It might be better to trust him when weighing the risks and return.

But, maybe because she's too preoccupied with the matter of regaining information about Miharuru and co, and the feasibility of the place also can be seen clearly, Satsuki's overlooked one thing.

The matter regarding the act of the invasion toward the royal castle is a felony which will be sentenced with death penalty if it's confirmed to be true.

In short, the action that Rio's going to do is a law breaking act.

That will cause her to become reluctant if it's the normal Satsuki in the peaceful time.

But, the patterns she encountered this time are something that couldn't make her oppose it.

In short, she was set adrift by how influential the conversation was.

"I'm glad that this talk is concluding quickly. Just in case, I'll tell you about this in advance, secret meeting is not the method to meet them multiple times. To the very last it's emergency means. If you want to meet them again after this, please check your mutual intent by discussing it"

"You're right. Should we live together, or separately, maybe it's of no use and not something that you can give the solution to me....."

Satsuki sighed lightly while saying so.

".....Yes. I'm of no use and can't give you the solution"

Rio's muttering with a low voice.

"EH? "

Satsuki's unintentionally gasping to his coldhearted voice, and suddenly raised her face.

But, for some reason Rio's smiling kindly.

She can't feel the remains of a suspicious person, that smile is similar to a clergy who hides their emotions.

Seeing that smile, she thought that somehow she can place her trust into this person.

But, somehow the matter regarding the person called Rio is something that she can't grasp very well.

At the same time, she felt that he's a mysterious person.

Maybe because she absolutely can't feel any risk assessment from him.

This kind of feeling is something that she doesn't have if it's a human who has his self-interest behind his action.

It's an anticlimax or should she say, she feel that it's a bit too mismatched.

Thereupon Satsuki's sighing lightly inside,

"..... I can't fully put my trust on you yet but, please receive my gratitude.  
Thank you"

## Part 4

She said her gratitude while peering into Rio's eyes.

Perhaps, it might be because she wants to peer into Rio's heart.

She's not stepping herself up, because something like peering into the heart of your opponent isn't an easy matter.

"It's nothing, I'm only doing this for myself"

Rio's smiling as if troubled while replying to her.

"Yes"

After the short reply, Satsuki's stepping in as if to entrust her body to Rio, gently placed her left hand to Rio cheek.

And then, after smiling as if enjoying her action, she's peering at Rio's face from point-blank range even more so.

"OOH ! "

Despite being unexpected and lascivious, that was a lovely gesture.

The looks of the audience is fixating on them.

While twirling around when they do a rotation, they keep carving of elegant yet rhythmical steps.

"You seem to be enjoying this aren't you"

Rio asked her.

He noticed a slight change in Satsuki's atmosphere which kept sticking on her till a while ago.

"I see. Because it's a rare chance to dance with the someone who understands my feelings, so I'm trying to give you a passionate dance in order to not get myself swarmed by proposals for a dance after this"

Satsuki's showing her impish smile.

"Am I your man repellant ? "

Rio was smiling wryly.

"That's right. It's troublesome when you receive a dance invitation right after returning right"

Replying so, Satsuki blushes lightly and then removes her gaze from Rio.

Maybe she's somewhat embarrassed with their situation, being glued to each other.

"I suppose that there's many people who want to dance with Satsuki-san you know"

"I'm reluctant to do it you know. I hate the idea of having to dance with someone that I don't know"

Satsuki sighed lightly.

"I'm someone who you don't know"

"You are..... Well, I have been surprised in various ways by you, right. I mean, it was really surprising when I suddenly heard a voice resound inside my head. Maybe, I can tell that somehow you're someone who won't cause trouble. Don't you think that this compensation is fine to make up for that ? "

Satsuki's looking at Rio with a pleasant smile floating on her face while saying so.

"That's harsh you see"

# Part 5

Their eyes meet and then, they start laughing together.

Soon after that, the musical performance for the dance is coming to an end.

The most of applause that was coming from the spectators was not for Christhardt and Charlotte, nor Hiroaki and Liselotte, it's was meant for the pair of Rio and Satsuki.

Though one part of the spectators doesn't find that to be amusing, the evening party is going on well from thereafter and that ended the first day of the evening party.



After the evening party has closed it's curtain, Rio's returning toward Duke Kretia's mansion in which he was previously staying along with Liselotte.

Though Liselotte seemingly wanted to ask something when they're on the way to home, Rio's ignored that all along.

Liselotte too won't inquire in such a rude manner, thus time is flowing by toward bedtime.

And then, the evening party of the capital keeps going on in the silent night.

The time for the full moon to hang on the southern sky will be coming soon, Rio decided to slip out from the mansion when most of the people in the Duke Kretia mansion are already in their dreams.

The defense of Duke Kretia's mansion is strict.

Whether it's raiding or slipping out of the mansion, the biggest barrier is Liselotte's chamberlain, Aria Governess.

He has confirmed that Aria's sensitive to sign.

He already made preparations to slip out the mansion last night, though Rio tried to secretly leave to the garden in the name of "training" while basking with the night wind, Aria also nonchalantly came to the garden and greeted Rio.

Aria was looking at the figure of Rio swinging his mock sword with the expression as if admiring him for some reason.

But as expected, it doesn't mean that Aria also happened to stay up all night long.

If it's for work related to personal care of Liselotte, Aria's bedtime is also quite early.

Of course, the bedtime of the humans who live in this world is quite early compared to the Japanese people who live in modern time.

The cost of light also couldn't be taken as trivial matter, that's why many people are preparing to work early in the morning.

Now back to the main topic.

Rio's dressing formally in black and then heading toward the royal castle under the cover of the night.

The moonlight is shining upon the royal castle, the faint light of magic tools which have been lit in every turn of the royal castle.

Though the time has rushed late into midnight a long time ago, to welcome the foreign guest from the foreign country, currently the defense in the royal castle is even more strict than usual.

Though the inside of the castle has fallen into silence, great numbers of soldiers are being deployed on the rampart and on the solid castle wall which is towering high with its massive size, they've been extremely cautious as to not even let one mouse to invade the royal castle.

The thing about an outsider creeping into the castle without being found by someone is an impossible task even if that person is not a run-of-the-mill person.

But, it's a different story if that person can fly in the sky without making any sound.

Though the soldiers are sharpening their eyes and ears while keeping their vigilance for the living beings or demons who fly in the night sky, as expected, it's a difficult matter for them to discover an invisible object which is flying

without making any noise.

Satsuki said that her room is on the top floor of the spire that is towering high at the royal castle.

Therefore, something like creeping in it is not so difficult for Rio who was flying in the sky with spirit arts.



Satsuki's wearing her one-piece pajama and sitting on top of her bed while hugging her knees, she was staring at the full moon that's peeking out from the south balcony.

## Part 6

(..... Will he really come ? )

Rio has said that he'll come to meet her when the full moon is floating in the southern sky.

Currently the full moon is hanging just right of the southern sky.

When she tries to calmly think about it after the evening party has ended, Satsuki reached the conclusion that invading the royal castle is impossible but, if it's going as his declaration, Rio will come at any time.

(I though the students that were wandering in and out of the male and female rooms during an excursion trip might feel like this ? Somehow, maybe the current me is slightly understanding their feelings.....)

A smile peeked on Satsuki's lips.

For some reason her chest is throbbing loudly.

Because she can't go anywhere with her confined status, this might cause the release of adrenalin.

Though this was the first time breaking the law for her who's hailed as a proper and diligent girl by her surroundings in high school, Satsuki's feeling excitement in herself for this very reason.

(A wrong thing to do, huh. Sure it is. Though he's creeping in, it'll be quite bad if he leaked his position, wouldn't it. If he's unlucky, it'll come to death penalty.....)

It's the so called invasion to the castle where the royalty is living.

And in the end, he's been trying to take out Satsuki, the hero.

Despite not by accident, it definitely counts as a criminal act by the law of the Galwark kingdom.

Though in the case of Japan, the crime of invading one's house is a light crime, never did she think that the act of invading the place where the royalty are living is counted as a light crime in this world.



It's definitely a heavy crime.

The worst possible sentence is death penalty.

Satsuki suddenly pondered about such things.

"....."

She was making light of the situation since her consciousness is stolen by the information of Miharuru and co, despite paralyzing her intuition, Satsuki was feeling uneasy as if a bucket of cold water is being poured on her.

(Will he..... Really come ? Or was he just joking ? That or did he have full confidence in his skill.....)

Satsuki's recalled the throbbing of her heart which is obviously different with the one till now.

She has never violated the law up till now.

She was taught to pay attention to the eyes of the surrounding people in her everyday life as the daughter of a company president.

She came to persuade herself without an example in her surrounding as the student council president in high school.

That was how she was living and raised in Japan.

Though everyone has their own moral standards, Satsuki couldn't help but feel a stronger reluctance than a normal person for breaking the law or doing something taboo.

Much less to say if it's an action which is deserving of death penalty.

(There's dozens of defense soldiers who are patrolling inside of the spire. There are also several soldiers in another room. I wonder how he's planning to come ? Is there an accomplice ? But, someone who can guide him with free pass till this room is.....)

She's pondering on the way that Rio'll be using to come toward her room.

But, she couldn't get an answer when thinking about it by normal means.

Impossible, is it.

He'll be found by the soldiers who are always patrolling when attempting to move inside of the spire.

The soldier in front of the room won't give a pass to enter the room to someone without a justified reason.

When it comes to the night time, justifying a reason is also greatly limited.

## Part 7

(There's no way that he got heated up and stunned the soldier whose been inside the spire ? It'll become quite tumult if it's really turning out that way..... But, in addition to that, the means of entering this room is..... ! )

When her imagination reached that far, Satsuki was suddenly taken aback.

And then shifted her eyes to the south balcony which she kept open.

(There's no way that he's intending to climb the wall of the spire right ? )

The height of the spire is several dozen metres.

Surely, though she wants to believe that he won't do something like climbing the wall of the spire——,

(..... What I want in the end after all)

The inside of her head became jumbled with various things, Satsuki was somehow a bit lost in her thoughts.

She is reluctant to break the law.

But, she wants to meet Miharu and co.

There's two means to meet them, it's whether they come to meet her, or she goes to meet them.

For example, even if she's summoning them to this castle, she wants to have a discussion regarding the risk of it beforehand.

Since maybe she'll bring inconvenience to Miharu and co if she's calling them, if they're going to come, she wants them to know the danger it'll cause them.

And then, she wants to convey this danger from her own mouth. Since she thinks that not doing so is a cowardice.

Even so, what is the best way to have that kind of discussion.

Must she meet Miharu and co by breaking the law as Rio suggests, if it's the so called invasion, even if she writes a letter, will she receive the letter delivered by Rio\*. [TLC\*: リオが提案した通りルールを破って美春達に会いに行く

か、侵入できるというのなら手紙でも書いてリオに届けてもらうか。] [ED: Rio suggested breaking the law, the so called invasion, Satsuki doesn't want to do that, and thinks that, even if she were to write a letter, would Rio bring her the answer Miharuru would write.]

"Haa....."

She's sighing lightly as she can't derive to an answer.

In the end, it's vexing to the point that she has no choice but depend on Rio.

Thereupon, a figure of a person quietly appeared on the south balcony without showing where they were coming from.

Next moment, gentle wind is blowing into the room while making "Hyyu" sound.

The wind is diffusing as if circulating to the corner of the room and then, it was returning toward the balcony.

".....Eh?"

Satsuki's bewildered by the mysterious movement of the wind that was blowing into her room.

Though there's slight illumination by the moonlight, she doesn't know the identity of the figure that's wrapped in total darkness.

What she barely understood was only the fact that he's wearing a hood and dark clothes.

"Excuse me. I'll use detection..... Magic. It seems there's a guard soldier outside but, there's no surveillance inside of your room. I came to meet you"

Thereupon, a small voice of a young man is resounding inside of the room.

The owner of the voice is quickly entering the room.

"..... You're, Haruto-kun right ? "

Satsuki's putting up her guard while timidly asking him.

"Yes. That's right"

It was a familiar voice which she heard before.

Satsuki breathed in relief.

But, a guilty feeling is immediately rushing into her chest.

"You're really..... Invading the castle, aren't you....."

[\[1\]](#) Gap of Morale conduct

## Part 8

Satsuki said those words with a slightly unpleasant tone.

"Yeah, it's as I said right. I said that I'll manage it somehow"

Rio's tone while replying to her was calm.

"That's so but, you mean you are raiding the castle alone ? "

"Yes"

Rio's replying nonchalantly.

"..... You, you're actually a spy of a foreign country right ? Doing something like climbing the wall in the midst of this darkness isn't something that can be done by anyone right ? "

Satsuki's sending an inquisitive gaze to Rio.

Doing something like raiding dozens metres high spire by climbing it's wall in the middle of darkness isn't something that can be done by a normal person.

The possibilities are only someone who's received a harsh training to do this kind of work.

Though it might be because she's watching too many dramas and movies, Satsuki thought was along that way.

"You're wrong. I'm really nothing more than an ordinary person"

Rio's shaking his head while smiling wryly.

"There's no way that's true, since you can't just simply invade the royal castle alone....."

Satsuki's face cramped.

"Certainly you might say so"

Rio's agreeing with a puffed smile.

"....."

Satsuki finds herself unable to retort to Rio's words, several seconds of silence

are descending inside of her room.

"..... Riight, even more so, nobody noticed ? If this kind of thing is leaked out, you might be receiving a death penalty. It's still possible to back off now, for you to be brave and risk something like this....."

Satsuki told him that with an awkward expression almost immediately.

Despite it being in the cover of darkness, Rio could feel the guilt that was released by Satsuki for some reason.

And then, vaguely guessing what she has in her mind in this situation.

"Could it be that you're having cold feet ? "

So Rio asked her with a plain tone.

"....."

Satsuki unintentionally gasped for breath, it's a bull's eye.

## Part 9

"I'm sorry. My explanation is insufficient right. This action of me raiding the castle is an action that obviously should be punished, and the action of me sneaking out with Satsuki, the hero, is..... despite not a subject to punishment, it might be a deed that is going against the law. Though I have no intention to be provocative, I don't mind to go back if you've no intention to meet Miharu-san and co by going as far as breaking the law. I mean, if you, Miharu-san, and her friends all want it, it's possible for you to meet them in the castle. The thing that is certain is that I'm in a hurry"

Saying so, Rio's looking at the place where Satsuki's standing.

Despite being unable to see opposite party's face clearly due to the darkness, Satsuki couldn't help but notice a bit of the bottom of Rio's heart.

"..... You don't think I did something wrong, do you ? Meeting with Miharu-chan and co even if I have to break the law"

Satsuki's asking timidly.

Her heart is beating heavily with [dokundokun].

"Mistake..... Is it. Though I don't understand about that matter very well, I'm not particularly concerned about that. So as to not regret it later, I choose the best methods as necessary. Of course the talk about my moral value is within the scope of not ringing a warning but, it's only that much"

Rio's reply was truly a light way of reasoning.

It's same as him saying that he won't even hesitate to break the established law of the country if he deemed that it was necessary.

Because in reality, currently Rio's already breaking the law of Galwark kingdom.

Though Satsuki knew with their conversation till now that Rio's a rational person, that kind of impression she had toward Rio was repainted in an instant.

"So the current situation isn't contrary to your moral value, is it ? "



"If it is, I wouldn't have even come to this place, you know"

Rio's smiling wryly while answering her with a composed tone.

"You..... Despite knowing what going that far means....."

Satsuki's whispering those words with an appearance of being tormented by guilt.

He's intentionally breaking the law while knowing full well of what he is doing.

So far, Satsuki's never even considered to do that kind of action.

"Do you disdain such a action ? "

Rio's calmly asking her.

"!!!..... There's..... No ..... Way"

Satsuki felt that her face became hot.

It's a lie. She indeed feels so.

indeed, Satsuki disdained Rio's action.

Even if it's necessary, for Rio to easily commit this kind of crime.

Because she couldn't see Rio as nothing but a man outside of her common sense.

But, Satsuki was somehow ashamed that Rio can see through about that aspect of herself.

## Part 10

(Why is he in this place right now ? It's for me, Miharu-chan, and co, right. It's not for himself. And yet, here he is..... Offering choices to me. And yet, I.....)

What she really should disdain is herself.

It was prepared till this stage by Rio, who's unrelated to this matter.

And yet, despite there being a chance to stop it, she's retreating at the last moment due to impending crisis and for her own self-protection.

Despite it's for herself, just pondering all over the place from a safe place won't change anything.

Satsuki was truly ashamed at that personality of her.

"What should be disdained is me, right....."

Satsuki was muttering absentmindedly with self-derision.

But, that instantly changed to a serious expression and,

"Sorry. Please let me meet with Miharu-chan and the others. Please help me meet them"

She's bowing very deeply to Rio.

There's still the feeling of repulsion in her to not commit a crime.

She was sure of that.

But, her wish to meet Miharu and co is stronger than that.

She didn't think that was a mistake when she thought about it that way.

Of course, the matter of them doing a secret meeting is just unreasonable and maybe only served to delay the problem.

Even so, the gist of it is, she can meet Miharu and co without any kind of problems.

Would there be a better reunion than this.

The youth who was standing before her has made that preparation.

In that case, she should tell her gratitude to this youth.

Other than disdaining from him for his action.

Satsuki felt so.

"..... Is it okay ? "

Rio's asking as if slightly surprised by her response.

"Yeah. I mean, I want to meet Miharu-chan and co. I want to meet and chat with them. That's the reason why you're preparing that situation, right ? "

"Yeah, well, that's true....."

Rio made a slightly evasive answer.

Maybe because he's slightly bewildered by the change of Satsuki's attitude.

"I want to meet Miharu-chan and co. I can't lie to that feeling. Not like I want to lie either. So that I won't regret it later, right"

Satsuki's smiling gently as she said that.

Rio's eyes are opened slightly wide.

"In order to not regret it, is it ? "

"Yeah. These are your words though, aren't they"

"Is that so"

This reason is somehow easily resounding in Rio's heart.

"That's why, please. I'm really sorry for the change of my attitude at this late hour but, please take me to where Miharu-chan and co are"

## Part 11

And then, she's addressing to Rio with a sincere expression.

"Understood"

Rio said that as a light smile blooming on his face.

"But, it's a bit too late for this now, I mean it's as Satsuki-san said that there's a possibility that I'm a spy right ? And yet, aren't you curious about it ? "

Rio asked while looking at Satsuki.

Thereupon, Satsuki's chuckling lightly.

"What are you saying. I thought that I never said something like you being a spy you know ? "

Was her answer.

"I might be trying to assassinate you, you know ? "

"There's a time and place for everything. But if it comes to that I'll fight with all my power"

Satsuki's replying that way while slightly shrugging her shoulders.

Rio replied to that with smile on his face.

"Understood. In that case, shall we go. Toward the place where Miharu-san and co are"

"Yeah. Please take me there. .... Even so, how can you climb the wall of the spire ? It means that we're going to be descending the wall of spire to return right ? "

So, Satsuki's asking Rio about the method he was using to arrive to this room.

When thinking about the height of the spire, to be honest, she wants to be spared from descending along its wall.

But, the answer that came from Rio was greatly betraying her expectation.

"I didn't climb it you know"

"EH? "

The moment she understood the meaning of his words, Satsuki's tilting her neck.

"I descended toward it"

Maybe because of Satsuki's expression, Rio's tone when he replied to her is slightly pleasant to be heard.



After holding Satsuki on the balcony, Rio's soaring high in the sky while being covered by the curtain of the night sky.

Their bodies keep ascending slowly.

(N-No way ? How can we fly ? Levitating powers ? )

Satsuki's doubting her own eyes seeing the phenomenon which is completely defying the rules of gravity.

Slowly but rapidly, their bodies are soaring toward the sky.

"Uwa~a ! No way ! Amazing ! "

In the blink of an eye, the view of the royal castle became smaller, Satsuki couldn't help but to say her admiration. [TL : Another sinker]

Though she can see many tiny light spots in the royal castle far below her, Satsuki's voice isn't even reaching the royal castle.

## Part 12

"Amazing ! Amazing ! See, it's amazing you know ! "

Satsuki's raising a joyful voice.

Up till now, she never saw the sky from so close. [TL : Airplane?] [ED: Not all people can afford plane tickets you know]

When she turned her face upward, the night sky was decorated by countless shining stars, when looking below, the light of the full moon is gently shining upon the world.

It can't be helped that she feels happy and is really enjoying that.

"See, have you seen that ? See ! That place, the stars are so pretty and the moon is so close ! "

Satsuki's laughing innocently while pulling Rio's sleeve like a child.

"Yeah, I've seen it you know"

It was a scene that he has seen so many times up till now.

So Rio replied with a wry smile.

"Fufu, that must be right. So you understand right. Fufufu"

Satsuki was laughing as if she's really happy.

As if she's completely released from the stress which was haunting her up till now.

Rio's looking at Satsuki who makes that expression.

That was the purest expression which she'd shown to Rio so far.

He can't even feel the slightest inch of her stouthearted expression which she'd shown in the evening party.

Yes, the one who's on Rio's arms is she who was showing an expression befitting her age, it was the expression of a normal girl who you could find anywhere.

"N? What ? "

Before he noticed Satsuki's facing toward him, and she asked Rio while leaning closer toward him with a delighted face.

"It's fun, isn't it?"

Rio's asking and,

"Yeah, it's fun you know ! "

Satsuki's seemingly slightly embarrassed but, she's still answering Rio with a wide smile on her face.

"But, I wonder if it's a bit cold here"

Though currently Strahl region is in the spring season, it doesn't mean that the cold night can be compared to Japan.

Moreover, when it came to their position which is high in the sky, the cold seeping into their bones is mercilessly coming upon them.

Despite putting on the overcoat she borrowed from Rio, she's only wearing her pajamas below that.

Despite no matter how much she's getting excited due to the adrenalin, it's impossible for Satsuki to not feel the cold.

"Please hold a bit more, it's just a bit more till we arriving at the meeting point"

"EE~h ? "

## Part 13

Satsuki's letting out a slightly pouting voice.

"It can't be helped then. Well then, could you fly a bit faster, please"

Satsuki nestles closer to Rio.

"It's warm"

And mutters so.

The dream-like moment for her is coming to an end in the blink of an eye.

"We've arrived you know"

After slipping out of the royal castle and flying on the air, Rio suddenly told their arrival.

"Is that so ? This place, seems like inside of the forest though....."

Satsuki timidly said those words while looking at the surrounding ground where they're about to land.

This place is the open space located inside of the forest which they can reach after advancing for a bit more from the grain producing region in the surroundings of the capital.

Maybe he is saying that Miharu and co are waiting inside of the forest.

After finishing a miracle-like flight, Satsuki has slowly regained her composure.

(As expected, this is a trap after all.....)

Satsuki's drenched in cold sweat after pushing her anxiety.

At that time.

"Satsuki-san ! "

A voice who called Satsuki's name is resounding in the vicinity.

Satsuki's sending her focus toward that direction by reflex.



Thereupon, she could see the figure of several people approaching her from inside of the darkness.

The voice which she is familiar with, and which she missed.

They're inside the darkness but, Satsuki knows.

Yes, the one who is standing right in front of her is the three of Miharu, Aki and, Masato.

"Everyone....."

Satsuki said that with a voice filled with emotion.

*"There's no doubt about it".*

That is the figure of her companions.

And then, despite extremely moved by their reunion, for some reason, Miharu and co stopped their feet several steps before reaching her place.

"N? What's matter ? "

Satsuki's tilting her head as she was asking for the reason of their delicate sense of distance.

Miharu and co, each of them are looking at Rio and Satsuki.

For some reason, Masato has a grin on his face as if understand the situation, Aki's looking while having a light smile on her face as if feeling embarrassed.

And then, Miharu was smiling awkwardly as if slightly bewildered by the situation.

*"There's something strange here."*

Satsuki who thought so is tried looking at her situation.

"AH....."

And then she noticed.

The fact that Rio's carrying her like a princess. [ED: You know, In a bridal/princess carry]

The thing about them glued together for safety reasons is something that can't be helped but, more than that, the distance between them is strangely

close.

The fact is that Satsuki is clinging to Rio as if embracing him.

## Part 14

"Hey, how long you're going to hold me on your arms ? "

Satsuki's asking that while looking at Rio with glaring eyes.

"Uhm, I would like to release you so very much but, I need you to release your hands first....."

Rio's replying with a dry laugh.

Therefore, Satsuki finally noticed the fact that she was the one cuddling with Rio.

Maybe because she was excited, it seems she had let her guard down.

"..... ! "

Satsuki released her hands which was coiling to Rio's body in panic.

Thereupon, Rio immediately dropped Satsuki on the ground.

Satsuki then quickly took some distance away from Rio.

Without understanding what she should say in this situation, a delicate silence has descended on this place.

Clearing her throat with a cough and then,

"Uhm, Yah~ho . Is everyone healthy ? "

Satsuki's saying that with a smile as if trying to deceive them.

# Chapter 96: The Conversation and Reunion of the People of the Same Home

## Part 1

"Unless you have nothing against chatting while standing, we should enter the house for the time being"

After briefly introducing Celia and Aisia, Rio proposed to change the scenery.

By the way, just in case, since it would be hard to explain Celia's matter, she introduced herself using her alias, Cecila.

Regarding the rock house, they brought it here before taking Miharuru and the others to the inn of the capital.

"House you say ? In the middle of the forest ? "

Satsuki restlessly looked around in her surroundings unable to find anything resembling a building.

Though Miharuru and Aki smiled when looking at Satsuki's reaction, Masato alone was the one who showed a slightly proud expression.

"Over here. Satsuki-san"

After saying so, Rio took the lead and they all walked towards a rock.

"A-A rock ? "

When she discovered the gigantic rock enshrined inside the darkness, Satsuki let out a slightly bewildered voice.

"Yes. The insides of this were turned into a house, here is the entrance"

Rio opened the wooden door and entered the rock.

When the door was opened, a bright light escaped the indoors towards the outside.

"He~, it really was turned into a house. Interesting"

Satsuki entered the house while surveying the surroundings of the entrance while expressing great interest.

But, that was as far as she could keep her composure.

"Ha..... ? "

After passing the front door, Satsuki showed a surprised face.

In there was a living room which exceeded her imagination.

The first thing reflected in her vision was a truly spacious living room.

There was even a concrete ground as a place to take their shoes off, there was no partition wall in between the living room and the entrance.

Though it had a construction that was different from the traditional Japanese architecture, if she had to express the atmosphere inside, she might feel that it had a modern touch.

Satsuki didn't like the overflowing image of high class formalities like the castle room which she was residing in.

But, because the dwarves who were acquainted with Rio displayed their skill, the inside turned into a place where a Japanese could live without having any out of place feelings.

In the nice and comfortable interior, high quality furnitures were placed.

"It's better if you take off your shoes, isn't it ? We have a shoe rack over there"

"Ah,..... Yes"

Satsuki followed Rio's instructions and timidly took off her shoes.

And then, after placing her shoes in the shoe rack, she surveyed the interior again.

## Part 2

"It's better than the room at the castle but. This place, would be suitable for a room in one of the best hotels there are....."

Satsuki muttered those words with a cramped face.

Maybe because he heard her muttering.

"I wonder about that. Yet, there's still room left for a sixth person"

Masato told her that earnestly while nodding with "uhnUhn".

Miharu and Aki were also nodded along with him.

"Ahaha. After getting used to living in this house, the inn of the capital which we were using starts to feel narrow, doesn't it"

"Yeah. The meals in this place are also delicious"

They start talking about various things.

"Just in case, we are saying that we were staying in the most prominent hotel in the capital, you see. And yet, comparing comfort, the room of that hotel isn't that different from the house we're living in, you know"

So, Celia smiled wryly while giving additional information.

If those words were to be heard by the dwarves who live in seirei no tami village, and who had a big role in the construction of this house, they would be nodding with proud expressions on their faces while saying "Of course it is".

"He, Hee..... I-Is that so"

Satsuki comprehension was already unable to catch up with the situation, but she couldn't help but absentmindedly reply appropriately while looking at the interior of the house.

"Since it'll be difficult to keep standing like that, please sit for the time being. There's something that you wish to talk about right, please take your time talking between the four of you. Now, I'll prepare some delicious tea for you"

Rio said that to Satsuki who was standing dumbfounded.

"Since I want to have another discussion with Cecilia and Aisia, will both of you go wait in my room please ? "

"Ka~y. Let's go, Aisia"

"Uhn"

Celia and Aisia started to head towards Rio's room together.

But, Celia stopped her steps in front of the door as if recalling something and,

"Ah, Haruto ! I would like some tea, you know, the usual one. Make it piping hot ! "

Smiling happily as she made that request before entering the door room. [ED: I'm pretty sure you can't enter doors lol]

"Understood"

Rio nodded happily and then left towards the kitchen.

"Ah, let me help you, Haruto-san"

Thereupon, Miharu offered her help as if she had waited for that.

"Please, enjoy your time together with Satsuki-san, Miharu-san"

Rio refused her offer while shaking his head.

But, Miharu had already made her move.

## Part 3

"I can't just let you to do that alone you know. Moreover, it's faster when two people are making it. Please let me to help you"

She already arrived at the kitchen while saying that.

Rio and Miharu faced each other in front of the kitchen.

"Uhm, well, would you help me ? "

Rio said those words after peering at her expression as if embarrassed for a moment.

"Yes"

Miharu replied with a delighted expression.

Thus, the two of them entered the kitchen and started preparing the tea.

Their cooperation was extremely good.

In the end, it was only the three of Satsuki, Masato and Aki that were left in the living room.

"Take a seat, Satsuki-nee-chan"

Masato said that as he sat on the corner of the sofa\*. [TL\* : The "L" part of the sofa]

Aki sat along with him.

(Everyone is adapting more than I expected huh. And yet, despite appearing like this, I still have my guard up)

She enjoyed the night of flying just now to her heart's content but, she's not that satisfied as if it was somehow a fruitless effort.

Though there were many things she wanted to ask them, she knew that it would cause slight annoyance if she asked about them bluntly, so Satsuki simply sat obediently with slumped shoulder.

"Ah, Amazing. The sofa is so fluffy"





Rio and Miharu soon returned from the kitchen.

They prepared several people's worth of tea on top of the table and used a complete set of white porcelain-made tea set.

"We'll go back to the castle before midnight, Satsuki-san. Since it'll get dangerous if the fact that you disappeared is known, but for now please just have a nice talk without minding about the time"

"Ah, yes. Uhm, thank you....."

Satsuki said her gratitude with a timid tone, maybe because of the slight tension.

She'll be fine if she talks with Miharu, Aki and Masato.

Rio came to that conclusion and then replied with a smile on his face.

"It's nothing, I'll excuse myself then"

Saying so, Rio went back towards his own room.

Finally, the ones left in the living room were only the four japanese.

"Uhm, though I already said this to Aki-chan and Masato-kun, let me say it to you too, long time no see, Miharu-chan. It's nice to see you so healthy"

## Part 4

So, Satsuki addressed the three of them.

"Yes. I'm glad that Satsuki-san is healthy too"

Miharu replied while showing a gentle expression on her face.

"Yeah. I'm healthy you know. Well, I have always been staying inside the castle without trying to do anything, you see. Moreover, I can meet you guys this way"

While Satsuki smiled at them, Miharu, Aki and Masato were being bashful as if feeling awkward.

"Well then. There are many things to make our conversation enjoyable, but won't you tell me about pressing matters before that ? Our time is limited"

Satsuki proposed that they should make full use of their time.

"Yes. Uhm, well then, from where should we start at ? "

Miharu asked while tilting her head.

"U~hm, you're right. For the time being, what about after you came into this world, won't you tell me what has happened so far ? "

".....Yes"

Miharu nodded immediately.

"Uhm, we also don't really understand as it happened so suddenly but——"

Miharu told her that after taking a short breath and recalling the events of that day.

About the matter that they were suddenly somewhere in the middle of the plains, about the fact that they encountered a group of slave trader mercenaries while lost, about the fact that they were taken captive as slaves, about the fact that they were saved by Rio who just happened to be passing by that place, and then about the fact that they have been under Rio's protection since then, and then they recounted everything that had happened till

today——.

Satsuki silently listening to Miharu's story without interrupting her.

Though there were many questions floating in her head, first she wanted to know directly what has happened.

And then, after hearing the complete story, Satsuki showed a grave expression.

"I'm sorry. Since you guys got dragged into this world during my summoning as a hero..... Right. And you were about to become slaves....."

Satsuki lowered her head while saying so.

It seems that somehow she feels that the misfortunate events which fell onto them are her fault.

They showed a bewildered expression and,

"That's not true you know ! "

Everyone denied together.

Satsuki's body trembled.

"But ....."

Her voice spilled, sounding as if vanishing from Satsuki's mouth.

"I mean, wasn't Satsuki-san dragged in too? There's no reason to apologize you know"

## Part 5

Miharu told her.

"Yup. Satsuki-neechan has no need to feel indebted you know~w"

"It's as they say"

Aki and Masato followed after Miharu.

"Even so, maybe you would not have been involved in this incident if you were not by my side you know ? Since we were summoned into this world by the Holy Stone(Brave Stone) as it was summoning heroes....."

"Even if you say that, it also can't be helped. Since regardless of what happens, you yourself was not aware that you were going to be summoned to this world as a hero"

Miharu replied while gently shaking her head.

"Miharu-chan....."

Satsuki chewed on her lips with a downhearted expression.

"I mean, it's as Miharu-neechan said. Moreover, according to Haruto-anchan's story, we were separated by accident, it seems that it's to prevent if there's some kind of accident in one place\*" [TL: Like being trapped inside rocks]

Masato said that to encourage her.

Thereupon, a doubtful expression came upon Satsuki's face.

"Uhm..... What do you mean ? "

In order to clear her doubt, Satsuki asked Masato.

"EH? Aa~H, Uhm..... What was that. I can't really remember it since it's a complicated story. I'll leave it to you, Aki-neechan ! "

After laughing awkwardly, Masato asked Aki to do the explanation.

Somehow it seemed that he couldn't really remember the small details.

"EH, M-ME ? Uh~m....."

Even Aki who suddenly received the pass from Masato was confused.

Miharu smiled gently while looking at their reaction from the side.

"I also don't really understand the fundamental theory behind it but, it seems that somehow the magic that was used when they simultaneously summoned both Takahisa-kun and Satsuki-san to this world was the cause of our separation"

And then, Miharu took over the explanation.

"The magic to summon Takahisa-kun and me ? "

"It's similar to a certain magic which moves stuff to a separated place by interfering with space. We were summoned by that kind of magic"

"He~, it's the first time I heard that, as I thought magic like that does exist"

Satsuki's nodded as if really interested in that topic.

"Yes. And then, you can say that maybe it's because we were very close to each other until just before being summoned to this world. Two magic-circles\* were invoked and each of them summoned Satsuki-san and Takahisa-kun separately. Though it seems that only the two of you were supposed to be transferred when both of you were summoned, the three of us who were by your side got involved in that summoning. Our transfer coordinates were a bit off, and we were transferred close to the middle of both of your transfer points, or so....." [\*ED: God I wish they were called spells since chapter 1... Well, I can do that in LN translation]

## Part 6

Miharu simplified the explanation that she heard from Rio to the best of her abilities.

"In short, aside from me, there's a possibility that Takahisa-kun was also summoned as a hero..... Right ? "

"Yes. Haruto-san has said that it might be so. But then, since there's no one but the three of us who witnessed the magic invoked for the two of you, the thing which we saw might be incorrect but..... What did you feel right before you were being summoned, Satsuki-san ? "

"I felt that my surroundings were slowly being distorted. It's as if the space was coiling to form a vortex"

"It could be proof of that magic being invoked. Satsuki-san aside, it seems that a similar phenomena may have occurred with Takahisa-kun as the target"

"I see, so that was the reason"

Satsuki showed an expression as if she began to understand something.

"Thank you. I heard really interesting things"

"Don't mention it, since it's nothing more than a retelling of what Haruto-san said"

"Fu~hn, so that was it. .... I was a bit anxious about what kind of person he is but, it might be nice for the story to derail like this"

Satsuki said so while smiling wryly.

Following that she showed a slightly serious expression and,

"Sorry. Thank you very much. I'm slightly confused which words are better said on this occasion but, I'm glad that I could meet all of you after coming alone to this world. At first I was desperate and even came to think that I might be the only one who was summoned to this world. And yet, another summoned hero said that he's Japanese, so I came to the conclusion that maybe you guys had also come. I felt relieved. That's why, he—— I was truly surprised when

Haruto-kun said that people sharing your names are under his protection. And then, I felt feeling relieved at the same time. I'm really happy, and grateful that you're safe and sound" .

Satsuki told them that, feeling relief from the bottom of her heart.

"Yes. We felt the same way. I was pondering how we would meet you when we heard from Haruto-san that you are in the castle but, he said that he would negotiate about that with Satsuki-san....."

Miharu said that as if slightly embarrassed.

"I see, so you have received that much help from him, haven't you"

"Yes, the truth is we're doing really well because of Haruto-san. ....It's as if we have left anything and everything to him"

Miharu said so while showing an apologetic smile.

"You're unable to properly express your gratitude, right?"

"Yes"

## Part 7

Miharu nodded deeply.

"Nevertheless, it has been painful for you so far, hasn't it. You're also properly taking care of Masato-kun and Aki-chan. You did great, Miharu-chan"

Satsuki tightly clasped Miharu's hands who was sitting by her side.

Miharu shook her head in panic.

"No, I really haven't done anything....."

"I don't think so. Since I feel relieved just by knowing that there's someone in this truly unknown world who I know beside myself. Much less to say if that person is older than myself. Right, you two ? "

Satsuki asked as she looked towards Masato and Aki.

"YES ! "

"Uhn ! "

Aki and Masato nodded at the same time.

"I thought that it was already hopeless when Miharu-neechan went another direction in a different coach. Aki-neechan was crying at that time"

Thereupon, Masato started to recite about that story.

"WHA ! T-That's not true ! "

Aki who sat by his side replied nervously.

"That's a lie. Didn't you make an uproar as if you were gonna lose it and started crying"

"I said that's not true ! In the first place——"

Aki was desperately trying to stop Masato who was about to tell his story.

And then, it was about to develop into a sibling quarrel like usual but——.

"Fufufufu..... Ahaha"



Satsuki started to giggle as if she just saw something funny.

Being taken aback, Aki and Masato ceased their quarrel.

"Uhm, Satsuki-san ? "

Miharu who sat by her side asked Satsuki.

"Fufu..... A~~h, that's strange. I'm sorry for laughing"

After giggling lightly for a while, Satsuki apologized for her sudden laugh.

"Bo, it's okay but. Was there something strange ? "

So, Masato asked.

"I mean, to think that I could see the two of you quarreling like this as if we were in Japan. I'm glad that I got to see that after a long time, and somehow I felt it's funny"

## Part 8

Satsuki explained the reason why she suddenly started laughing.

"A~H, I see"

"Ahaha"

Masato and Aki smiled wryly feeling awkward.

"That certainly is true. If it's the usual, Miharu-oneechan or oniichan will stop us before it gets too heated up"

Aki showed a slightly lonely expression.

"Lately, it's become the duty of Haruto-anchan and Miharu-oneechan"

Masato's earnestly told her that.

".....I see. So you've not heard about Takahisa's location yet ? "

Satsuki asked that question as she guesses from the change in Aki's expression.

"Yes. It seems Haruto-san is still trying to look for him but.....  
.....How about Satsuki-san's side ? "

Miharu agreed and then asked that.

"I don't know"

Satsuki shook her head as if feeling apologetic for that fact.

"Is that so....."

Miharu replied with a slightly dejected expression.

Masato also sighed in disappointment, Aki hanged her head down feeling downhearted.

After confirming their reaction, Satsuki,

"But you see. After hearing the story from before, I thought that there's only one possibility"

After she said that.

"R-Really ? "

Aki vigorously straightened herself.

"Please calm down. I thought that there's a possibility for it but, I've no proof of that"

"E-Even that is okay ! Please tell me ! Where's oniichan ? "

Aki asked with her feelings on the edge.

"Saint Stellar Kingdom. A certain country south from Galwark kingdom. Maybe you guys have already heard about that country ? "

"Yes. We were taught by Haruto-san"

Aki replied immediately.

"Come to think of it, Haruto-anchan did say that. There's a possibility that there's a hero in that country"

## Part 9

Masato said that as if recalling Rio's words.

"Oh my, so you know about it. He's a quite well-informed person, isn't he. You should know that I'm the main guest of the evening party which is held in the Galwark kingdom's royal castle, right ? As a matter of fact, it seems they also invited the hero of Saint Stellar kingdom to that evening party. Well, they have not arrived yet though"

Satsuki replied while smiling wryly.

Though she hoped that the hero is Takahisa, Aki lowered her head downheartedly when Satsuki said "Not arrived yet".

But, Satsuki kept going on with her story as it is.

"It seems that the country of Saint Stellar is extremely closed off country\*. We've sent a message for the time being but, the reply still hasn't come. It seems they usually reject right away without waiting too long. Then, there's the fact that my handwriting is on the letter held by the messenger. If Takahisa-kun is the hero of Saint Stellar kingdom, he should have seen my handwriting. If that's the case, shouldn't he come ? "

[TL\* : It's like Japan before black ship appearance] [PF: do people recognize others handwritings these days?]

Satsuki smiled broadly while asking that.

"Y-YES ! "

Aki repeatedly nodded her head.

"Since the evening party will be held over the span of three days, I think that there's still a possibility for him to come. There seems to be exceptions but, in the case of prolonged evening parties, it happens often that the foreign guests start attending from the second day onward even tho the invitation is for the first day"

That's right, on the occasions where one holds a prolonged evening party, in the case of the foreign guests, depending on the status of their country or their

relationship with the other country, have situations where they shift their schedule quite frequently.

It's called the method of "*country invitation from the second day onward and, country invitation from first day*". [ED: You nobels make no sense.... I'm not even going to edit it, it's basically the same just said in a more fancy way]

For that sake, Galwark kingdom gave priority to the nobles of their own country to build relationship with Satsuki, the countries which they carefully picked and allowed to attend from the first day were just the Anti-government organization of Bertram kingdom and Saint Stellar kingdom.

That aside, they already made the arrangements for many people from the small neighboring countries to attend from tomorrow onward.

"R-Really ! "

"Yeah. Well, I'm not really sure whether he'll be attending the party though. But, from what I heard from the royalties, I think he'll be attending since, while they say that Saint Stellar is indeed a closed country but it still cannot be considered a hostile one"

"If that's the case, oniichan too....."

An expression full of hope floated on Aki's face.

Satsuki looked at her expression for a few seconds and,

"..... Well then. There's something that I want to ask from you guys"

"Yes. What might it be ? "

Miharu replied after readying herself a bit.

"If Takahisa is found, what are you guys going to do after that ? "

## Part 10

So Satsuki bluntly asked about what they'll do afterward.

"What we want to do, is of course, to be together with oniichan ! "

Aki said her wish faster than anyone.

"Well, that's that, right"

Masato also followed after Aki.

On the contrary, despite the expression floating on Miharuru's face as if she wants to say something, she just shut her lips and looks at Masato and Aki.

Satsuki looked at their situation and then,

".....I see. Does that mean that you're going separate ways with him—— With Haruto-kun ? "

When she asked so.

"EH....."

Aki and Masato stiffened when the question was asked by Satsuki.

But, contrary to them, only Miharuru showed a gloomy expression.

"W-Why does it come to us separating from Haruto-anchan ! ? I don't understand it. Why, why did it come to that ? "

Masato asked as his tone started to raise in panic.

"Maybe the way I asked that was a bit hard to understand. Maybe you'll meet Takahisa-kun in the near future. When it comes to that, which one will you choose to take care of you between Haruto-kun and Takahisa-kun ? "

Satsuki calmly threw that question at the end.

"T-That's why, how does that relate to separating from Haruto-anchan....."

Masato's tone got weaker as he was overpowered by Satsuki's presence.

"I mean, for example, if Takahisa is a hero, he will belong to a country just like in my case. If that's true, then Takahisa will have become a central part of a

certain country around this time, you know. For now the first candidate for that country is Saint Stellar kingdom"

So Satsuki told them about that fact.

Masato anxiously looked at Satsuki.

Satsuki decided to go on with her explanation without waiting for Masato's reply.

"In short, if you receive protection from Takahisa then it means that you're receiving protection from the country that he belongs to. If it comes to that, is there any reason for Haruto-kun to be together with you ? "

Satsuki calmly threw that question.

"T-There is you know ! Because Haruto-anchan is my swordsmanship master ! " [ED: teacher]

Masato replied while raising his voice.

"I see, so you're getting taught swordsmanship. It's good that you're learning a skill to protect yourself. But, the matter of Haruto-kun as your swordsmanship teacher and whether or not he belongs to the country which Takahisa-kun and you guys belong to is a different problem altogether"

## Part 11

Satsuki said that while staring at Masato.

"W-Why ? "

"He's not educated with Japanese morals. Haruto-kun has his own life. He has a place where he belongs to. Moreover, he might actually have other things that he must do. In short, he won't always go to the places which are suited for everyone you know. You should understand that, shouldn't you ? "

Satsuki gently said that to him as if admonishing the child.

"....."

Emotional feelings aside, maybe because he understands that, Masato was at a loss for words.

"U-Uhm. If that's the case, Takahisa-oniichan will come to us....."

Aki who sat beside him muttered timidly.

"That's depending on the agreement with the country but, first, seeing that he belongs to a country as a hero, maybe it's something like an easy part-time job ? "

"That's, right....."

Maybe because she already understood from the very beginning, Aki nodded her head as if feeling downhearted.

"Sorry for suddenly saying such strange things. But you see. Maybe you'll meet Takahisa-kun soon just like how you met me"

"Soon, with oniichan....."

Aki muttered those words as if chewing the meaning of them.

"The two of you are the little brother and little sister of Takahisa-kun, right? In that case, wanting to be together with him later when you're reunited is something that's extremely natural I think. But you see, please think hard about that choice . The reason is because this will involve your own safety too"



"..... Our own safety ? "

Aki asked while tilting her head.

"Yeah, I said it a while ago, didn't I. I said that *"Receiving Takahisa's protection means that you would be receiving the country's protection"*. Being a hero is a truly troublesome position. It has no substantial authority but, it can greatly affect the country. That's why many people are trying to use the hero. When someone dear to the hero gets captured, you will see how bad your situation is, won't you ? "

"..... How will it turn out ? "

"I can't say anything with certainty regarding this country but..... As long as nothing happens, you'll receive kind treatment you know. But, maybe they'll change as easily as turning the palm of their hand when a critical moment arrives upon them"

Despite making herself remember various hateful predictions, she needs to tell them the concrete details they're avoiding.

The stimulus is just too strong for the two of them that are still at a young age.

"At any rate, this world is not a gentle place like Japan. Currently you're receiving protection from Haruto-kun but, maybe you'll see the dirty side of humanity if you ever go to the castle. Maybe there's danger awaiting for you in that place. Even so, are you sure that you want to go under the protection of Takahisa-kun ? "

"....."

## Part 12

Aki and Masato couldn't answer her immediately.

Though she didn't know what they were thinking, their expression's told her that they were thinking hard about this decision.

"Though I ask you this question, it's not something you should answer right away. It's not a problem which you have to answer right away without thinking about it"

There were huge " ? " on the faces of Aki and Masato as if it was something they were not expecting.

"That's true you know. Even if Takahisa-kun does not appear, I think that it won't be hard to take care of you guys by asking Galwark kingdom. Uuhn, should I say that I want to be together with you guys? But of course, that's only if you guys wish for it"

"I see, there's also that kind of choice huh....."

Masato muttered as if convinced by something.

"Yeah. But, just like I told you awhile ago, danger will also come upon you by coming to my place. I feel that I'm a truly selfish person but, I want to be tied with this country and be the so called hero because then I can look for a method to return to earth. When I say so, the position of hero is more like a part time job, right"

Satsuki said that while showing a slightly self-mocking expression.

"Even so, Galwark kingdom wants me to be a hero. Even if I live in this world, I need to become the hero of Galwark kingdom to return to earth. Thus the current delicate relationship is forming while each side agrees and has their own purpose. Do you understand what this means ? "

Satsuki asked of them.

"Uhm..... Satsuki-san wants to go back to earth. Galwark kingdom wants Satsuki-san to be a hero. That's why, in reality Galwark kingdom doesn't want

Satsuki-san to go back to earth"

Miharu answered with a pensive look on her face.

"That's right. That's why, if you are ever come to Galwark kingdom, please know that it comes with the risk of being used as a hostage against me"

Satsuki told them so while letting out a troubled smile.

"Haruto-kun, Takahisa-kun, and me, each one of us live with different kinds of positions. Maybe, what you said, being together with everyone is a little difficult. Though it's a difficult problem to resolve, I want you to keep that in the corner of your mind. You're already facing that problem, you'll keep relying on Haruto-kun till you can at least find the answer but, you need a bit more time to think about it, don't you ? "

Satsuki kindly asked Masato and Aki.

The two of them nodded deeply.

"There are people who need you. There are people who want to be together with you. Lending your ears to listen to the words of those people is important. They'll support you when you feel troubled. I think that's also the case for Haruto-kun and Takahisa-kun. Even so, since this is your life, it's better to think about it by yourself, I want you to find an answer which you won't regret..... Or so it is"

## Part 13

Satsuki said that feeling a bit embarrassed.

Her eyes wandered around for a while after that as if feeling embarrassed by her speech and,

"Well, does Miharuchan understand just how meddlesome what I said is, I wonder?"

Satsuki asked that question as her line of sight stopped on Miharuchan.

"Ah, No. I..... That was rather vague but despite that, we can still meet Satsuki-san like this, I just have to think of what we will do if we find Takahisakun....."

"Yeah, have you found your answer?"

"Uhhhm ....."

Miharuchan showed a troubled smile while she looked at Aki and Masato.

"I've more or less found my answer"

Satsuki smiled at her answer.

"Is that so..... Then, that's the end of this topic ! Though it was our long awaited reunion, sorry for doing something that destroyed the mood ! Since I'll have to meet you like this as long as we live apart. I've conveyed what I thought so that you won't have to regret your choice"

Satsuki suggested to stop their discussion with the movement of her hand while showing a slightly embarrassed face.

Maybe she became embarrassed after their discussion ended.

Miharuchan, Aki and Masato giggled when they saw Satsuki like that.

The atmosphere in that place had softened and they became more at ease.

"Yes, let's leave the troublesome matters at that, instead let's do something more enjoyable. I also have things to say but, the majority of my stories involve me living inside the castle. My room is also a splendid one but, it feels

somewhat narrow and suffocating, you see. This place is better compared to that. Somehow it's really helping me relax my tense mind"

So, Satsuki sighed wearily when she remembered her daily life in the castle.

"Certainly, it seems that this place already feels like home. Now that you say it, I noticed it after not living in this house for a while. A~h, since we have finally reunited, maybe we should take a bath together"

Masato said that while stretching his hand.

"That sounds good. A bathtub ! I want to immerse myself in hot water while stretching my arms and legs. I have really missed Japanese style bathtubs"

Satsuki agreed while wearing a lonely expression on her face.

"Ah, this house has a bathtub, you know. There's a rock bath and there's a cypress bath. Shall we all go then?"

Aki said that as if it was a great idea.

"A~h, that sound good. Isn't something like a cypress bath and a rock bath the best combination"

Satsuki replied with a favourable voice.

"Se-Seriously ! With everyone ? "

## Part 14

Masato asked with an embarrassed face.

"It's better if it's Haruto-san, you're out for eye candy, right ! "

Aki's immediately poked at Masato's head.

"That hurts. I'm just joking you know"

"Liar, look your lips are smiling and your eyes are filthy. Stop looking at us with eyes like that!"

Aki glared at Masato, who was holding his head, with an apathetic line of sight.

"Iyaa, Miharu-neechan and Satsuki-neechan aside, something like Aki-neechan's naked body is..... Ah, no, I'm just kidding ! Please don't hit me ! "

While he was in the middle of his sentence, Masato shook his head vigorously to the left and right with a paled face.

Aki raised her trembling thin arms and then brought it down to Masato.

"Ahaha. Well then, shall I ask Haruto-san whether we can enter it ? "

Miharu suggested to them.

"Yeah. Yeah if possible..... WAIT A MINUTE ! "

Satsuki exclaimed with a surprised expression.

"Uhm, yes....."

Miharu looked at Satsuki's face startled.

"..... This house really has it ? A OFURO[i] ? "

Asking that, Satsuki gulped her saliva.

"Y-Yes. There's a bit onsen[iii]-like bathtub in this house you know"

Miharu nodded jerkily as she felt such an unusual vigor.

"O-Onsen you say ? "

At that time, Satsuki's eyes glared with a brilliant shine.



Going back to before their conversation about "*whether they can enter the bath or not*", Rio listened to the current situation from both Aisia and Celia in his room.

Rio sat on the chair, and faced them who sat on the bed.

There was small desk placed right on their side.

There are three cups releasing vapor on top of the desk.

"Did something in particular happen during the stay in the inn of the capital ? "

Rio asked that question after lightly tasting the tea.

"Nothing in particular"

Aisia answered first, giving only a brief conclusion.

Though her expression could be seen as nothing but apathetic, that was her normal expression.

Rio unintentionally chuckled since it was somehow a little funny.

## Part 15

"It seems they were nervous at first but, it seems they already got used to the life in the city. We also escorted them while they strolled in the safe area. Ah, of course we wore our hoods"

In contrast to Aisia, Celia's answer was more concrete.

He couldn't see things like stress or anxiety in her actions nor her expression.

"I see. Thank you very much. Both of you"

Rio gave his gratitude to the two of them who were always unwavering.

He noticed that it had been awhile since he could feel relaxed just by a bit of conversation like this.

"Was everything good on your side too, Rio ? Nothing unpleasant happened ? "

Celia asked while peeking at Rio's face.

"Yes. I got no problem on my side. But, as I thought, it calms me the most when everyone is in the house, doesn't it"

Rio nodded while laughing.

"Uhm, is that true ? Miharu, Aki and Masato also feel like that you know?"

Celia told him that with a slightly embarrassed face.

"I see. I'm glad then"

Rio was looking down at the tea in the cup as he replied to her.

And then, a light and tranquil smile peeked on his lips.

"Come to think of it, I should apologize for the slow response. Celia-sensei, I want to talk about the matter of you returning to your home, is that okay ? "

After looking at the cup for a few seconds, Rio raised his face and looked at Celia.

"Ah, uhm"



As their vision overlapped as if a surprise attack had happened, Celia replied with a flustered voice.

Her heart throbbed faster, somehow she could feel that her cheeks became slightly hot.

"As expected, please let me to accompany you while you send a greeting home. Though you seem to be in a hurry, would you wait for a bit more ? "

Celia regained her composure after those words.

Come to think of it, at some point the talk about Celia returning to her own home in Bertram kingdom was put on hold.

Though Celia planned to go back alone so that she wouldn't trouble Rio, and she already told him about wanting to act separately just before they came to Galwark kingdom.

Rio said that he'll accompany Celia but, since she can't estimate just how long it'll take to return home in Bertram kingdom, the decision was to arrange the schedule so that he'll be attending the evening party first.

"Uhm, it's not like I'm saying for you to hurry up but..... Is that okay ? "

Celia asked timidly.

## Part 16

"Anytime is okay with me, the one who brought sensei to this house was me, wasn't it? So it's normal for me to go along with sensei"

"B-But the one who decided to slip out from that castle is me you know. Moreover, I think that I might cause some trouble for Rio if we were to go together..... I'm saying this is also for my own selfish wish....."

Celia's reply sounded weak in the end.

"Though I've said this before, it does not trouble me at all. The idea of taking Celia-sensei out from Bertram kingdom was my idea, and I'm the one who took that action first you know ? If that's the case, I should be responsible for taking that duty. It's because I was the one who kidnapped your family's most important daughter after all"

"I-It's not kidnapping ! Because I gave consent![1]"

Celia unintentionally shouted at him as she reacted to the word "*kidnaping*".

Rio showed a troubled smile and,

"But, maybe it's seen like that by people at your home. Even though you sent a letter to explain your situation, you didn't write any details and you didn't explain almost anything in fear of inspection, did you ? "

Was his answer.

The letter sent by Celia was a recording which was written in a way that only her family and Celia could understand.

But, if they do unnecessary inspection on the writing, she was afraid that they'll find out that the sender was Celia, that's why she couldn't write about the important matters.

"U-Uhn"

"In that case, it wouldn't be strange for them to think that Celia-sensei was kidnapped you know. Even if they don't, they will definitely worried about how Celia-sensei is doing right now. That's why Celia-sensei is thinking of going back

to your home for once, right ? "

"..... Uhn"

Celia nodded weakly.

"If that's the case, please let me come along with you. Since I think that I'm the one responsible for making Celia-sensei's house worry and must apologize to them"

Rio spoke in a calm tone.

"As I thought, it's troubling you after all....."

Celia smiled wryly while she muttered those words low enough so that it won't be heard by anyone. [ED: In a room full of spirit art users I think that Celia is the only one who didn't hear them]

As for her own feelings, despite her being quite unwilling to cause trouble for Rio more than she already has, it was meaningless as the more she rejects the Rio's helping hand, the more sentimental she became...

The truth is, she feels that it would be very reassuring if Rio came along with her.

There wasn't any reply from Celia.

"Celia-sensei ? "

Rio tilted his head when she muttered something.

".....Geez. Now I don't even know which one of us is the sensei here. This kind of talk is"

# Part 17

Celia showed a slightly delighted smile as she said that.

"Because my mental age is much older you know"

After looking at her with a slightly bewildered face, Rio said that in a jesting tone.

Celia nodded to those words, and then after straightening her back,

"Thank you, Rio. I look forward to working with you"

She bowed deeply towards Rio as she said those words.

=====

Next chapter is OFURO chapter.

[1] [TL : They're starting to act like bakaple]

[i] [TL\* : Japanese bath]

[ii][TL\* : hot spring]

# Chapter 97: Ofuro

## Part 1

It's been more than three months since Sumeragi Satsuki, a girl who lived her life in Japan was summoned to this world.

The only thing that's important for her is bathing. [alt: The biggest source of dissatisfaction for such a girl is bath.]

Certainly when it comes to royal castle there's a private bathroom but, it's only a shallow bottomed bathtub and there's not enough space to wash her body nor her hair.

The purpose of the bathtub is to wash yourself and not to soak in hot water, so there's no need to have a deep bottom. [ED: i.e bathtubs are created with shallow bottoms]

So for bathtubs like the ones in the castle, because it's inevitable that they need to replace the hot water every time it's used, the bathtub can't be made any bigger — or rather, there's no need to make it needlessly big.

Certainly, since the maid who gives personal care for her while in the bathtub of the castle is in the same room, the space of the room itself is guaranteed, but the bathtub itself is made relatively compact.

By the way, the royalties and titled nobles all have personal bathtubs in the mansions which they live in, but as for commoner families, big bathtubs are used just to wash their body and hair.

When it comes to Japanese people, they are used to luxurious baths and extravagant use of hot water in them, so it's not strange for them to feel unbearable due to the culture in which they're raised with.

In addition, when it comes to blooming 17 year old girls who are in the prime of their life, they're at the age in which they love bath the most.

Satsuki's also no exception to that and she loves immersing herself in hot water for a long time.

In short, Satsuki couldn't wait.

To resolve her days worth of fatigue inside the bathtub— —

To immerse herself inside the luke warm water while stretching her limbs  
— —

This pleasant feeling would be something that she will never forget.

However, she is not that selfish to have a bathroom made in the royal castle, the construction would cost too much.

As a result, Satsuki mourned wearily every time she entered the bathtub for these several months, and her everyday life passed with weary feeling.

It might be difficult hard for Miharu and the others to understand, because they have been enjoying the pleasures of a hot spring ever since they came to this world.

Although lately, they received culture shock when they lived in the inn of the capital.

That aside, for the current Satsuki, something like a hot-spring bath is a topic that she can't really ignore.

If she doesn't get the permission to enter the bathtub after going through every option negotiating with the owner of the house— —

But convenient for her, just when she made up her mind, Rio came to brew another batch of tea.

This situation befalling upon her is truly fortunate.

Immediately, Satsuki half-rose to her feet from the sofa and then quickly approached Rio.

"Nee, Haruto-kun. You see, I've a request"

Satsuki says while grinning ear to ear.

Miharu and the others, who are watching her from the right side of the sofa, are smiling wryly.

"Uhm, yes. What could it be ? "

Rio retreated one step as he feels an unusual pressure from her.

He gripped the empty teapot in his hand.

"I want..... You to lend me your bathtub"

Satsuki requests with a tame expression.

Rio can feel her strong determination as if she's about to exterminate a demon lord.

"Y-Yes. Feel free to use it"

Rio nods in spite of being overwhelmed by her enigmatic pressure. [ED: Her pressure is "like an enigma", took me way too long to pronounce that word correctly]

Thereupon, Satsuki expression become bright with "poof" as soon as he gave his permission.

## Part 2

"Really? Is it really okay ? "

"Yes, it's okay you know. Though you could have just entered the bathtub at your own accord"

Rio replies while giving her a dry smile.

Because she's together with Miharuru and the others, who are the residents of this house, it's not like he cares even if she's entering the bathtub at her own convenience.

But, Satsuki's rhythmically shaking her head in denial.

"What are you talking about. Since I'm going to use the bathtub in another person's house, it's just the good manners when I get proper permission from the owner of house, isn't it"

And replying like that as if it's just natural.

Rio's smiling gently as he thinks that she's truly a honest person.

"Understood. Well then, since the bathtub is just on the other side of the door over there, feel free to go with Miharuru and the girls"

"Thank god ! "

After getting the permission from Rio the house owner, Satsuki's suddenly showing a delighted expression with a firm pose.

"Well, let's go then, Miharuru-chan, Aki-chan"

Satsuki tells that to Aki and Miharuru while turning around.

"Since shower room only has room for two people, please go ahead with Miharuru-oneechan, Satsuki-san. Though it's been a while, I'll come inside after calling for Cecilia-san"

Aki replies to Satsuki.

There's more than enough room in the bathtub for all the girls, who are currently in this house, to enter at the time, but the number of magic tools to



wash their bodies is limited.

Originally, Rio made this house with the premise of living alone for the time being, but that has been slightly delayed.

"Thank you, Aki-chan. Well, shall we go then, Satsuki-san"

Miharu nods to Aki and decided to bring Satsuki first.

"Take your time"

Rio tells behind her back while smiling sweetly at her and thinking about how everything was decided without a hitch.



"..... So Spacious"

Satsuki muttered as she entered the bathtub.

Though she almost shouted "IS THIS SOME KIND OF LUXURIOUS HOTEL ! " when she looked at the noren\* placed as the entrance of the bath, that's already a trifling matter... [ED: The curtains with words on them]

And, because of the utopia which she could only dream about is unfolding before her eyes, she's just ignoring all kinds of trivial manners.

That's just how magnificent the bathtub of this house is.

The most fascinating point is the fact that there are two options here, one which rock bathtub and another cypress bathtub.

Different from the everyday type of bathtub, the wall composed of bare rocks completely makes it feel like she came into a hot-spring inside of a cave.

The hot-water is extravagantly flowing out from the faucet, and spilling on the brim from the bathtub.

The truly wonderful steam that is raising from the bathtub is slightly blocking her vision.

## Part 3

"It's as if we came to a hot-spring, isn't it"

Miharu says while smiling delightfully.

"..... Yes. It's wonderful"

Satsuki's replying with a slightly perplexed air.

"Over here. I'll explain how to use the bathtub"

"Ah. Uhn, please then"

Following Miharu's guidance, she first came to the shower room.

A mirror is embedded into the wall of the washing place, various bathroom appliances are placed under the mirror. [ED: On the pedestal?]

The two of them then sat on the chairs in front of the pedestal.

"Please touch this crystal to make the hot water flow out. The hot water will come out in accordance to how long you touched the crystal for although, the hot water will keep coming out for around 10 seconds just by lightly touching it"

As she says so, Miharu's touching the crystal embedded on the pedestal and then, while the geometric pattern which is etched on the mirror is shedding light, hot water was coming out like from a shower from it.

It's natural to think that there'll be expenditure of magical power to accommodate the continuous production of hot water, though it's efficiency is being improved by the spirit stone which is inserted in the core of the house.

The other magic tools in this house are also receiving assistance from that spirit stone.

"He~, how interesting"

As Satsuki also tried touching the pedestal, hot water started flowing from the shower overhead.

"The temperature is just right, isn't it. And yet, if only I could get this kind of convenience in the castle....."

Satsuki mutters with a envious tone.

"Very convenient, right. I also learned magic from Haruto-san but, it's still something which I can't fully understand....."

"He~, so you also learned something like that"

Satsuki lets out her admiration.

"Yes. Language, magic, self-defense arts, and various others things"

"So that's how it is. Say, isn't he quite versatile in many fields ? "

"I think so. He's an expert in cooking too, all these soaps here are also made by Haruto-san"

Miharu says that while looking at the types of soaps which were lined on top of the pedestal.

"I'm astonished. .... He really is versatile in many fields, isn't he"

"He's amazing, right ? The quality is better than the treatment and shampoo made in Japan" [TL : Honestly I don't have anything to say about this, this is the first time Japan defeated by another world]

"Really? I'm looking forward to it then. Because the soap which I've been using in the castle isn't good for my skin"

## Part 4

Satsuki's grieving lightly as she says so.

The type of soap which she normally uses is lower quality compared to the one made in Japan and can't be thought of as a luxury.

Usually people would think that commoners using better quality soap than the ones used by royalties is nonsense, but Satsuki's common sense has been overturning so many times after coming to this house.

After hearing the fact that there's an ofuro in here, Satsuki's expectations were steadily rising upward.

After that, Miharu's explaining the variety of the soaps, while washing her body.

"Come to think of it, this is the first time for me and Miharu-chan to enter a ofuro with just the two of us, right"

While washing her body with bubble soap, Satsuki then talked to her with a merry tone.

"That's right. It's unbelievable, like a miracle. We're bathing together like this in another world"

"Ri~ght. Fufu, how wonderful"

After smiling happily, Satsuki was sending a sidelong glance at Miharu's naked body.

"Uhn"

She's nodding soon after observing her.

Naturally, Miharu noticed where she is looking.

"Fu~hn"

Satsuki's grinning ear to ear.

"U-U~hm, what's the matter ? "

Miharu was hiding her body with both of her hands as if feeling embarrassed.

"Say, Miharuchan, you've quite nice curves there, don't you. Your skin is also smooth and silky"

And, a surprise remark came from Satsuki.

"EH-EEEEEEEEEEEEHH ? "

Miharu's face turned beet red like a ripened peach.

She's embarrassed and her body is squirming restlessly.

"That ladylike reaction along with such innocence is truly a girlish reaction, isn't it, Miharuchan"

Satsuki's nodding with "uhn-uhn" as if deeply moved.

And following that with,

"EY ! "

She's quickly circling around to Miharuchan's back and then squeezed her bulging breasts. [TL : Droool]

"KYAAAAA ! Sa-Satsuki-san ? "

Miharu's twisting her body due to Satsuki's molestation.

"I-It's ticklish ! Please stop ! "

# Part 5

By moving her own body, she's falling even further to tickling hell[2].

"I mean, it's because Miharuchan is squirming around"

"I-It's because Satsuki-san is touching me in strange places ! "

"Hee~, It's okay, isn't it. After all, there's nobody else in this place"

Satsuki's hand movements became even more lively.

"P-Please don't massage them ! "

Miharu tells that with a blushing red face.

"O~K"

Satsuki's hands stopped moving right as she said that.

But, those hands are still on Miharu's breasts.

"U..... Uhm, that....."

Miharu's moving her neck and sending a fleeting glance repeatedly to her back.

"What's the matter ? "

Satsuki's hands that are covered with foam are moving with a twitch.

"Hyauu~ . T-The hands..... a-and the foam is....."

Miharu's muttering and twitching while her body is trembling

"What about my hands..... And the foam ? "

Satsuki's asking with a enchanting smile.

"T-That feels..... Ticklish. Please let go of me"

Miharu pleads to her with a quivering body while short of breath.

"A~h, geez ! Miharu-chan is just too cute ! "

Satsuki firmly embraced Miharu.

"S-Satsuki-san....."

Miharu awkwardly mutters that while her body is stiffening.

But, Satsuki pretends not to see that.

"Listen to me"

And mutters that close to Miharu's ear.

"Y-Yes ? "

Miharu timidly replies to her.

"Do you want to assault me too, Miharu-chan ? "

"I-I CAN'T ! "

Miharu's unintentionally shouting loudly.

"Ahahaha, it's a joke, I'm joking you know. A~h, that was amusing"

## Part 6

Satsuki's replying as if the previous event is not her fault and readily separates her hands from Miharu.

On her face was a truly refreshing smile coming from the bottom of her heart.

"Mu~,..... sometimes you say some malicious things, don't you"

Saying so, Miharu was looking at Satsuki with scornful eyes.

"That's because I'm happy to finally be able to meet Miharu-chan after all this time. So it couldn't be helped that I unintentionally wanted some physical contact" [ED: I don't think "Skinship" actually means anything special so I'm changing it to physical contact, you know what she actually meant by "physical contact"]

Satsuki's telling her honest feeling so frankly without even being embarrassed about it.

"U~h....."

Miharu became slightly embarrassed due to that.

And then quickly lowered her face to escape Satsuki's gaze.

The silence went on for a few seconds after that.

"..... Thank you. Miharu-chan"

Satsuki muttered those words in a low voice.

"..... EH, For what ? "

Miharu asks while peeking with a sidelong glance at Satsuki.

"U~hn. Because Miharu-chan is still Miharu-chan, I hope ? "

"E~h..... Yes"

Miharu's lowering her head again.

Though she doesn't quite understand, saying something like that face to face at a time like this is way too sly.

Miharu thought so.

"Well then, shall we enter the long awaited ofuro soon ! "

Incidentally, after they washed their bodies, they finally decided to immerse themselves in the bathtub.

The one they chose first is the rock bath.

"Kuaaaa....."

Satsuki's forgetting how shy some girls can be and a writhing-like voice leaks out from her lips.

"This is what we're used to right. You can't say that you're entering ofuro unless you're fully immersing yourself in the bathtub"

Satsuki's letting out a relieved voice while lightly stretching her limbs.

"Fufu, that's right"

Miharu's nodding while revealing a sweet smile.

Thereupon, during that, the door of the bathroom made a loud noise as it swung open.



## Part 7

"Ara, it's just you Aki-chan..... And Cecilia-chan ? "

Aki and Celia were entering the bathroom together, probably because they chose to go shower after Miharuru and Satsuki themselves were already done washing.

"What a really cute girl, isn't it, Cecilia-chan. Is she an acquaintance of Haruto-kun or something ? "

Satsuki tells that with a fond expression while looking at Celia's naked body.

White colored hair similar to snow, dainty and tender skin, her body which is exuding girlish charm despite her petite figure was like a work of art,

"Yes. That's right. But, her appearances aside, she's older than any of us"

Miharuru told that to Satsuki as she guessed that Satsuki is making a mistake when trying to guess Celia's age.

"EH, You're lying ? I'm sure that she's just a little older than Aki-chan"

Sure enough, Satsuki eyes which were looking at Celia turned as round as plates.

"Right. First we heard about that we were also surprised"

Miharuru's nodding in agreement while chuckling with "fufufu".

"So that's how it is. He~..... I see....."

As she was muttering that, Satsuki's looking at Celia as if she's pondering about something and,

"..... Hey, just what kind of person Haruto-kun is ? I missed the chance to ask him about his identity due to various events but, when I was thinking about it, it doesn't seem that he's a noble of Galwark kingdom. On the other hand, it doesn't mean that he's from another country either, right ? "

She suddenly asked about Rio's identity.

Miharuru's blinking in surprise to her question.

"Uhm, I also think along that way but, I'm sorry. The truth is that, aside from the fact that he's traveling to various places, we know almost nothing about him....."

Miharu replied while bowing her head to apologize.

Miharu and the others are banned from telling about Rio's identity to any third party.

And also due to this rule, it's risky for Miharu or for the others to assertively try and probe too deeply about Rio.

But, amongst the facts that are known by Miharu and the others were things like the fact that Rio's using an alias and the fact that he was Japanese in his previous life, which she doesn't think are safe for disclosure.

After a moment of hesitation considering about how much is safe to disclose without telling false information, Miharu decided to protect Rio's secret.

"He~, so that's how it is"

Satsuki squinted her eyes as if really interested about hearing that while letting out a small moan.

And then showed a thoughtful look on her face again.

"Well then, asides that, though I'm still curious about his origin, why do you think he's so kind to the three of you ? "

"Why ? "

## Part 8

Miharu answered Satsuki with a question of her own.

"I mean, he keeps protecting the three of you free of charge without any kind of reward, doesn't he ? And even going as far for us as setting up a reunion like this. These kind of things aren't easily done to unfamiliar people"

Satsuki's stating her opinion.

Miharu nodded deeply as she understands what she means.

"That, that's right. Haruto-san, is too kind....."

Miharu's showing an apologetic expression as she said so.

"Fu~hn"

Satsuki's sending a fleeting glance at Miharu's body, and then,

"Just in case, I just asking to be sure but, he's not asking you to do something strange, is he ? "

She asked those questions with a slightly serious face.

"To do something strange ? "

Miharu's tilting her head with a curious expression.

"Hey, it's about THAT you know..... Uhm..... Like demanding your body ? "

Satsuki's saying that with a slightly blushing face.

"KA....."

Thereupon, just like that, Miharu entire face is blushing red.

"H-HARUTO-SAN ISN'T THAT KIND OF PERSON ! "

Miharu told that while raising from the bathtub.

Satsuki was looking at Miharu's face as if slightly dumbfounded by her reaction.

"Fufu, I could take a guess about his personality considering your reaction just now. As I thought, it seems that I'm not wrong believing that he's not a bad person. You'll be seen by Aki-chan and Cecilia-san if you don't quickly immerse yourself again you know ? "

Satsuki's telling that while laughing.

"Ah, yeah"

Miharu bows to Aki and Celia and then quickly immerses herself in the bathtub again.

"Are, Aisia-san ? "

Around the same time, the door of the bathroom is opened again, this time it's Aisia who entered the bathroom alone.

She briskly moves inside the bathroom toward the washing place and then she sits on the open bench on Celia's side. [ED: Which part is the showering room and which part is the actual bath.... I mean, who cares, it's all for fanservice anyway...]

In the next moment, water is appearing on top of her from nowhere, and then she rinsed her whole body with a flushing sound.

## Part 9

"Eh, what's that ? Hot water is coming out of empty space, but..... Did she use some kind of magic ? "

Satsuki who saw that scene is asking with round eyes due to her surprise.

"Ah, ahahaha..... Ai-chan is a bit special after all....."

Miharu's smiling wryly and gave a vague answer.

"I always feel anxious about this matter but, that girl, Aisia, isn't she just too beautiful ? How should I say, she's a charming woman, or rather it's even blurring the border of gender, it's as if she's on a different dimension....."

Satsuki's looking intently at Aisia as if being sucked in by her.

"Certainly. Ai-chan is giving off a slight feeling of a divine being, isn't she. Or rather, no human can ever rival her beauty..... I mean, even I don't know what I'm talking about, right. Sorry"

"Uhn. Somehow I understand your feelings. She's beautiful like a work of art, right. Cecilia-chan is also cute like a doll but, in the case of Aisia-san, she's too artificial as if really being a doll"

Satsuki's speaking while lightly waving her head.

Maybe because she feels Satsuki looking at her, Aisia sends a fleeting glance at Satsuki though, she washes her body again as she lost any interest in Satsuki after just one glance.

Miharu's looking at that situation.

(Yup, come to think of it, Ai-chan is a spirit, isn't she. She eats her meals, and doesn't feel uncomfortable after entering ofuro)

And thinking so deep inside her heart.

Though spirits don't seem to need to take baths or eat meals, but Aisia herself was the one who demanded to live like a human similar to Miharu.

Though she's used to it now and didn't feel that it's strange, thinking about it for a second time makes it actually quite interesting.

"Say, don't you think that it seems there are only beautiful girls in his surrounding"

Satsuki suddenly said those words after a sigh.

Miharu suddenly came to her senses.

"That's right, isn't it. Since Ai-chan and Cecilia-san are really beautiful. Aki-chan's also beautiful"

She reflexively agreed to Satsuki.

"Yeah. Moreover, Miharu-chan is a beauty too, right"

Satsuki added that while grinning widely.

In that moment, Miharu's head was blanked,

"EH-EEEEEEEEEEEEHH ? That's not true. I'm not beautiful at all ! "

## Part 10

She vigorously shook her head as she understood the meaning of those words.

"What are you talking about. Say, weren't you quite popular in middle school"

"I-I wasn't that popular. I, was a plain girl"

Miharu rose the speed of shaking her head in denial as if to say that's impossible.

Satsuki's sending a slightly surprised look to her who's not noticing it herself.

"Excellent grades, cute, and a good natured girl. On top of that, your dishes in the cooking club were delicious, it'll be strange if you were not popular. The truth is, even the male students in my class said that Miharu-chan is cute. You're well known as "Suitable for family-oriented wife""

Satsuki spoke about the romantic situation surrounding Miharu during middle school.

"T-That's a lie, right. This is the first time I've heard about that"

Miharu said that with an anxious tone.

But, as if finishing off a rooted enemy, Satsuki said,

"Say, you were a health committee member during your 1st year, right. It seems there's many male students who received your medical treatment. I won't say the names of them but, there are some male students in my class who have fallen in love with you"

Adding an even more complete explanation.

"..... Uhm, is that, true ? "

Miharu's asking timidly as if that information being quite a surprise for her.

"That's true but, could it be that you're not happy at all about that ? "

Satsuki asked Miharu who only showed a bewildered expression without showing any signs of being embarrassed.

"Ah, no..... It doesn't mean that I'm not happy..... Though I feel that I can't understand....."

Miharu's speaking with apologetic tone while hanging her head down.

"Arara, it seems it really is hopeless for them. Well, maybe that's just natural. You already have someone in your mind, don't you"

Satsuki sent an inquisitive gaze while asking that.

"Eh.....? "

Miharu, with big question mark plastered on her face, is staring back at Satsuki's face.

Satsuki strangely had an expression filled with self-confidence.

"Eh..... U-Uhm....."

Miharu muttered with a almost vanished voice.

*Could it be that she already knows it ?*

*How?*

Though questions kept appearing one after another in her head, putting that aside, she's filled with a sense of embarrassment.

Miharu's cheeks are flushing red in the next moment.



## Part 11

"As I thought, that reaction is your answer right"

"Eh, AH, H-Have you known about that ? How ? Though I never said that to anyone....."

"That's natural you know. It's just natural to know it when I see that reaction of yours"

Satsuki's letting out an impish laugh.

"Eh.....? ..... AH"

Miharu then noticed that she was tricked.

"You just tricked me, right, Satsuki-san ? "

Miharu's puffing her cheeks with a poof.

"Sorry. But, it's not like I'm tricking you. We've known each other since middle school"

Satsuki justified her laugh as if she feels it's funny.

"....."

When she said so, Miharu feels uneasy about whether she's really that easy to read.

But, for the sake of not giving too much information by saying too many things, she lowers her flushing red head in silence.

"It's irritating to think about what happened in the past, but I think everything between us was alright looking at it now. Or rather, we were already getting along before I noticed anything ? " [ED: Now this I'm not sure about if it is translated correctly:

"..... ? "

Miharu's tilting her head to the side as she's unable to understand the meaning behind Satsuki's words.

But, after correctly guessing that there's someone she loves, Miharu doesn't

have any composure left to think any more about that.

"Hey, what's the matter ? Miharuchan ? "

Satsuki's asking that while approaching her.

"I-I don't know anymore, hump ! "

Miharu suddenly turned her face away while puffing her cheeks as she says that.

Who knows, maybe Satsuki is trying to trick her again ?

If that is the case, she can't afford any more mistakes.

She judged so in an instant.

"Geez, please don't be angry. Miharuchan"

Though Miharu's reaction is so cute and is causing a turmoil for Satsuki's inner sadism, she suppressed that feeling and decided to curry a favor of Miharu.

She can still ask about the lovelife of her junior another time.

Since she only wants some skinship with her friend who she finally met in this world.

After Satsuki earned Miharu's happiness, they decided to keep immersing themselves in the bathtub till Aki and the others come.

[1] [TL\* : Japanese Bathtub]

[2] [TL : this is true apparently, especially the small one<— A claim from A certain Riajuu]

# Chapter 98: ..... Of The Third Person Perspective

## Part 1

In the end, the women camp spent more time bathing than expected, so they had to go back to the capital right after Rio and Masato were done bathing.

Rio first secretly sent Miharuru and the others back to the inn, and then he took Satsuki back to the royal castle.

"Sorry for overstaying. There were so many things that I wanted to talk about and it was so cozy....."

Satsuki told while smiling awkwardly.

"No, it's alright. Though it's not possible to meet whenever, you can still talk about that when we meet again"

Rio shook his head lightly in denial as he answered that.

They got their reunion after a long time in an unfamiliar world.

There might be a great amount of things that she wanted to talk about.

"Yeah. You're right"

Satsuki nodded while laughing gently.

And then, few seconds of silence followed.

Satsuki had an atmosphere around her as if she wanted to say something since a long time ago but, it seems she wanted them to hear about this matter.

But while Rio was speculating about that in his head,

"..... I've told Miharuru-chan and the others about what they'll face after this"

After taking a short breath, Satsuki muttered that in a low voice.

Rio squinted his eyes in hesitation and then,

"Is that so"

He threw a cold and blunt reply.

"You're not going to ask ? About what kind of talk it was ? "

Satsuki asked timidly.

"Because I have a rough guess"

Rio replied while smiling wryly.

Somehow Rio's face reflected in Satsuki's eyes seemed a bit lonely.

"I see....."

Satsuki muttered.

The silence descended between the two of them again.

"My apologies for troubling you. I felt that I absolutely had to convey it but, I couldn't bring myself to say it and wreck the mood"

Rio said that while suppressing his voice to a low tone.

There were no correct words that he could say at a time like this that came to mind.

Therefore, he could do nothing but excuse his own feelings.

Satsuki saw a slightly dissatisfied look in Rio's words.

## Part 2

"I think it can't be helped. It's natural that you can't ask something like 'Are you going to leave this place eventually' from people who you have been living with. Especially when they are the most important people to you, right"

Satsuki replied clearly while shaking her head.

"..... You could say it's true. However, it won't change the fact that you came to talk about running away"

Rio told her that while showing a smile full of self-derision.

"You have a strong sense of responsibility, huh"

"..... We're just cute girls you know"[Satsuki]

Such are the words they exchanged.

Satsuki smiled but only for a moment.

"I'm truly grateful to you. Even so, I can see my situation starting to change. I want to do something more about that"[Satsuki]

She said so.

"....."

After a moment of hesitation, Rio swallowed the words of objection that were about to come out.

Since there was no stopping once these words start coming out.

As it is, without any side yielding, both of them could only wait for something to happen.

"The most important thing is what you are going to do after this. This situation can't keep going on forever, or can it? "

Maybe because they are thinking about the same things, Satsuki opening her mouth.

Rio changed his line of thought while nodding slowly.

"Certainly. But, it doesn't mean that they shouldn't take their time thinking about that. Since they'll miss the main point if they rush the answer. Moreover, when they leave, they will cause a huge blow to people left behind"

Only time will show what they have to do.

In that case, being impatient is forbidden—— If it's a question which will take some time to get an answer, they should calm down before giving the answer that they feel is correct.

Because if they recklessly advance forward, the ones left behind would have no obligation to follow after them.

That's what Rio thought.

"You're right. I also want to be together with Miharu-chan and the others, so I think it's better for them to give their answer together"

"On that you have my support"

Rio gently addressed her.

"..... Thank you"

Satsuki looked downward as she gave her gratitude in a low voice.

"But you see. Miharu-chan and the others told me that they feel like they are troubling you. That's why I want to have a talk with you, just the two of us, alone"

"Alone with me ? "

## Part 3

"Yeah. I mean, we couldn't chat much during the evening party due to time restriction, although I can feel there was a need to do so but couldn't bring myself to say anything after we slipped away from the castle to the place where Miharuru and the others were, right ? " [ED: Yes, this was all one sentence ...]

Satsuki replied with a playful smile.

Rio eyes wandered around as if pondering for a while before,

"That's right. Since it seems that Satsuki-san was completely stunned after flying in the air"

He agreed with her while feeling quite strange.

"S-Shut up. Anyone would be excited when they get to fly like that for the first time. I've calmed down since then, haven't I"

Satsuki averted her face with blushing cheeks.

A while later, she glanced at Rio and,

"Hey, what kind of person are you ? "

She muttered in a low voice.

"..... What kind of person am I, huh"

For a moment, Rio showed a serious expression on his face.

But, it turned back to his gentle expression right away and then,

"That, again, is an extremely philosophical matter, isn't it"

Replying so to Satsuki.

"You're right. Even so, I'm unable to stop thinking about it you see ? It's because I don't know anything about you, it's as if we're just acquaintances"

Satsuki replied calmly.

*"Now you won't be able to deceive me."*

She had that kind of enthusiasm.

"Is that so ? "

"That's right. At first I thought that you were a cooperative worker of that child called Liselotte. The truth is, I thought that you had that kind of relationship with her, that's why I was a little worried about her. But, it seems that you are somehow working independently. There's no way I could see you working as a spy for some other country\*. That's why, deep inside, I couldn't fully comprehend your existence"[\*ED: Very loose translation]

Rio squinted his eyes lightly as he heard her tell him that.

Though he was slightly interested about what she thinks about Liselotte, but because it would stray from the current topic, he intentionally left that matter in the corner of his mind.

"Well, it's because I'm nothing more than a business partner to her, and through that received an invitation as a show of goodwill"

"When it comes to that, is your relationship with Liselotte in the evening party as you said ? "

"Yes"

Rio nodded calmly.

"I see. Even so, that's not what I wanted to know"

"Is it about whether I'm the kind of a person who'll harm Miharu-san or the others ? "



## Part 4

When Rio asked that, Satsuki calmly shook her head in denial.

"You're wrong. I've been observing you and so far I don't think that you're the kind of person who'll harm them"

"That's..... I'm honored by your praise"

Rio's told her his gratitude with slightly loosened cheeks.

"But, that's not what made you confused. So what is it that Satsuki-san wants to know about me ? "

"There's not that much time till we reach the castle, and, well, since I hate asking in a round about way I'll get straight to the point, you can speak in Japanese, right ? " [ED: You could ask anything from him, and this is what you go for?]

Rio stared in amazement when she asked that.

But, maybe because he suddenly though he understood the reason for that,

"Yeah, you heard about it from Miharu-san ? "

He said that as the likeliest reason that she would know.

Rio didn't seem to be particularly disturbed about the matter that Miharu or the others have revealed his secret.

On the contrary, if he trying to hide the information it'll feel unnatural and will only made her more curious about him since Satsuki already know Rio to certain extent.

So it couldn't be helped that he would have had to talk about himself at some point due to the flow of conversation.

"You're wrong. Miharu-chan said that she didn't know anything about you"

"Then, how ? "

"It's because, after hearing the story about when Miharu-chan and the others just arrived in this world, I thought that it was strange"

"What's so strange about that, I wonder ? "

"Miharu-chan and the others said that they almost became slaves since they couldn't communicate. Then and there they were saved by you, and you taught them the language of this world"

"I see. And then, you came to that conclusion, huh"

Rio nodded while saying that as if convinced by her.

It's not strange she asked that given so much information.

"Yeah, not even 3 months have elapsed since Miharu-chan and the others came to this world. So they must have had a lecturer along with teaching material since it's impossible to learn a language, that they have no knowledge about, to the level where they have no problem using it for a daily conversation, in such a short period of time as long as no magic is used" [ED: ... since it's impossible to learn a language to such a level in such a short period of time. Good job translating all that, Cnine]

"If we began with trying to find a mutual understanding through body language, it would certainly take more time in order to reach the point where we can use it for daily conversation, I see"

Rio agreed while smiling wryly.

"Yes. But since Miharu-chan and the others were still learning about language, this meant there was no way for them to learn magic. The next thing that come was what language both of you can use to communicate but, Miharu-chan and the others have restrictions in the languages which they can use. In conclusion, the language which I thought had the highest possibility was the Japanese language. In addition, that ofure which gives a japanese-style sense is also a hint right" .

Satsuki's stated her reasoning.

"That's correct"

Rio confirmed Satsuki's guess without even trying to be secretive about it.

## Part 5

"Uhm, you're not trying to hide it ? I don't see why not but, I thought that you made a request to Miharuchan and the others to not recklessly spread any information about you....."

Satsuki asked as if surprised by his attitude.

"Yeah, that I told them indeed but, you already knew that, didn't you ? "

Rio nodded as he sent a look of admiration to Satsuki.

"Even though it doesn't seem this way, We have been acquaintances with Miharuchan for a long time. You see, both of us became staff members of the student council in our middle school. So for some reason I knew that child was trying to hide something about you"

"I see. As expected of a former student council president, right"

Rio praised her in a joking manner.

"..... That has nothing to do with that you know. Moreover, recklessly spreading such rumor is the most dangerous thing. There's something that I want to ask more than anything else"

Satsuki told that as if feeling embarrassed.

"Though I can roughly guess what you are about to ask, I don't mind answering it if you promise to hide the information you learned about me recently, can you ? "

"Naturally. That was what I was going to do since the very beginning. Rather, I don't mind doing that as a favor"

Maybe because she feels at ease with what Rio required, Satsuki nodded vigorously.

On the contrary, going as far as to say it's okay to do that as a favor.

"Favor ? "

"Yeah. But, because it doesn't mean that, the way I am now, I could

immediately lend you something, I will lend you my help whenever possible if the time comes where you need my help in the future"

"You're exaggerating, right. There's no need to go this far for me....."

Rio responded as if being troubled by her.

"You can't be like that you know. You are protecting Miharuru-chan and the others, you helped me meet them, moreover....."

Though Satsuki was rebutting him with a slightly angry tone, she suddenly made an unnatural stop in the middle of her sentence.

"Moreover ? "

Rio asked as he was curious.

"..... I-It's nothing. What I mean is that I owe a lot to you"

Satsuki said that with blushing cheeks and then, turned her eyes away from Rio.

Even if he were to ask more questions, he didn't expect to get any answers.

Moreover, he can't be that forceful and ask her that.

"I see. If you say so, I'll keep what you said in my mind"

As he said that, Rio smiled as if it's a bit funny.

It's because everything went well for the sake of Miharuru and the others.

So he had no need to demand that as a favor.

But, if Satsuki says that she wants to give her gratitude, then he'll be obediently receiving it.

## Part 6

"And then, please do so. Since keeping a debt isn't in my character"

Satsuki shrugged her shoulders as she said that.

"Well then, shall we return to the main topic. You wanted to ask whether I know a method to return to earth, right ? "

So, Rio just bluntly asked her main question.

"..... Well, you've completely seen through me, haven't you"

Satsuki nodded while giggling.

"In that case, I'll say what I know since there's no need to keep it as a secret. It's the same for me, I don't know any method to return to earth"

"I see, so you really don't know..... Huh"

Satsuki was slightly depressed.

In the first place, if Rio knew a way to return to earth, he would have already sent Miharuru and the others back to earth a long time ago.

Though if it's just limiting on them to not be able to return immediately, such news should have been spread long time ago. [TL\* : 制約があつてすぐに帰れない可能性もないわけではないが、それならばとつくにその情報が開示されていてもおかしくはない。]

That's why she didn't expect anything from the very beginning but——

Still, deep down she was hoping that she might be able to get a hint about how to return to earth.

"In addition, I will answer as much as possible about anything you want to know. But, I don't think that it'll become a hint of a way to return to earth" [ED: The "hint" is in katakana so there really is no other way to translate this. Think of it as if she wants some foresight][PF: Could "clue" work?]

Rio gave a warning beforehand so that she would lower her expectations.

"First, I want to know, at what date, including what year, you came to this

world but..... Say, you're a quarter or half-japanese..... Right ? "

Satsuki asked while peeking at Rio's face.

Judging from the way he looks, Rio's appearance was very close to Japanese.

Though he currently changed the color of his hair to silver, his appearance would be closer to a Japanese one if his hair was black.

Though he looks like a real Japanese person, nevertheless that's probably impossible.

That's why she came to the conclusion that he's at least a quarter or half Japanese.

That's what she thought but,

"It seems you made a big error at this point. I'm a human who was born and raised in this world"

Rio replied while shaking his head in denial.

"Eh..... I-Is that so ? " [ED: Yeah, he even told you that like 7 chapters ago]

Satsuki tilted her head while showing a puzzled expression.

Then, why can you speak the Japanese language.

## Part 7

"Yes. I was born in Bertram kingdom. I remember saying that in my self-introduction to Satsuki-san, didn't I ? "

"..... Yes. Yes, you certainly said that..... didn't you"

Satsuki nodded lightly.

"This is true. Since I certainly have the memories of me being born and raised in this world"[Rio]

Though she's somehow unable to understand the meaning behind his words, Satsuki decided to listen to Rio's story for the time being.

"But, I have another person's memories in me. "They are the memories of a man who used to live in a country named Japan"[Rio]

Rio said that with an indifferent tone.

"EH? Used to live in Japan..... Memories ? "

Satsuki's train of thought had come to a halt due to Rio's explanation which was way beyond her imagination.

Though she tried crunching the meaning of his words one by one from start to finish, she could do nothing but give a sloppy answer.

"In short, are you talking about..... being reborn ? "

So, Satsuki digested Rio's explanation into one thought.

Though she was seemingly not quite confident in her guess.

"Yes. It's exactly as you said"

Rio suddenly gave a nod of agreement while at the same time shrugging his shoulders.

"So, you're currently a human of this world but, before that..... You used to be Japanese ? "

"That's correct. That's why I can talk in Japanese and could teach the language of this world to Miharuru and the others" [ED: English is funny, because

both being from a country and speaking its language use the same word, "Japanese" in this case]

"So that's it..... So that's the case....."

Satsuki looked to the void with a dumbfounded expression for a few seconds while muttering those words.

"Can I trust you ? "

"You..... Have no other choice but to trust me, right. In the first place I'm also personally experiencing an impossible experience like this coming to another world thing. If going by logic, normally..... I would think that the dead won't be reborn again"[Satsuki]

Satsuki replied with a troubled tone.

"That's right. I mean, in the first place, I'm already floating on cloud nine, because of this strange phenomenon which made it possible to understand the language of this world, if it's in this world, you have no choice but to trust what has happened, right"[Satsuki]

Satsuki grumbled about something as if trying to convince herself while pressing her head with one hand.

Her common sense had been there as if to disturb her comprehension but, it seems that she can bring herself to understand it.

"Well, that's quite an absurd story, isn't it. Normally, it's natural for anyone to not understand the situation and say 'Eh, is that so'"

Rio said that while smiling wryly.

"I'm sorry. I was shaken by that story you see. Somehow too many out-of-common-sense events have been happening since I came to this world, despite understanding the reasons there's just too many difficulties"



## Part 8

Satsuki apologized while coughing lightly.

"My condolence"

"..... Thank you"

Satsuki gave her gratitude as if slightly embarrassed by her reaction.

But, maybe because she felt a bit awkward,

"By the way, there's one thing that I want to ask, could it be that that girl, Liselotte, is the same as you, a human who's actually from earth, just reborn ? "

Satsuki quickly attempted to change the subject.

"Yeah, that should be the case when you think about it. I see, you noticed it too, huh ? "

"Yeah. As I thought you would say..... So you can feel it huh"

Satsuki showed an expression as if understanding.

"How did you notice it, may I hear the reason ? "

"That girl's job is being the president of Rikka firm, right. That place is selling fashion commodities gearing towards women in quick succession, and those commodities are normally found in Japan. It's only natural to be suspicious about that"

Satsuki told the reason why she suspects Liselotte.

Satsuki being a woman has many chances to use the commodities geared towards women sold by Rikka firm.

"Other than that, is there any other reason ? "

"Of course, that much wouldn't be enough to suspect someone. The first reason was a cue which came from an unexpected daily conversation"

Saying so, Satsuki showed a slightly proud smile.

"The people of this world obviously can't speak in Japanese, you know. And

yet, I hear it as Japanese. But, the way their lips are moving is obviously not Japanese, you see. On the contrary, it seems that I who's speaking in Japanese is heard by them in this world's language, but..... Well, let's leave that topic for now"

Satsuki went back to the main topic when the conversation is starting to derail.

"You see the movement of their lips don't you. There, I noticed it. Only when speaking of the unique commodities of Rikka firm, the movement of their lips completely matches the name that I used to hear. Though the other proper nouns of this world completely do not match anything I know, only the commodities made by Rikka firm are perfectly match the sound of the words and the movement of the lips. If there's so many coincidences, you'll think that it's suspicious, wouldn't you ? "

"Certainly, you could say that but..... You have really good observation skills, don't you"

Rio admired the high level of Satsuki's observation skills.

"Well, it's not to the extent of the strange phenomenon which happened to myself, right. Nevertheless, I'm still unable to understand the theory behind it even till now"

Satsuki's reply was mixed with a sigh since it was hard to put in words the mystery of the translation ability.

"That might be the effect of ancient magic which was provided to the hero in their Divine Raiment. Since, according to the legend, it's seemingly a weapon made by god, so it's difficult to reproduce it or explain its effect with the current understandings of magic"

"Divine Raiment huh. I've heard that too but, that's also something I don't quite understand, you see"

## Part 9

Satsuki said that with slightly pursing lips.

"So you normally don't carry it ? "

There's the event where Rio secretly looked at Hiroaki using his divine raiment of tachi[i].

When Hiroaki shouted the name of the weapon, a tachi suddenly appeared.

Certainly, at that time, he was doing a mock battle against Stead.

But, since his skill was extremely abysmal, Hiroaki's only powerful in physical strength and completely didn't give off the feeling of an amazing hero.

"Yeah, because it's normally in its spirit form inside the body of the hero as a way to arm themselves[ii]? So to say, it's there. I had a dream about something the first evening after coming to this world. I received an one-sided explanation in how to use it while having that strange dream. When I summoned it, it formed a weapon suitable for its owner but..... to be honest it feels refreshing, you know"

"I see. Spirit form..... Huh. So it means that you are not summoning it with space magic"

Satisfied with the theory for summoned divine raiment, Rio nodded as if really interested in it.

"By the way, what kind of weapon do you hold, Satsuki-san ? "

"Mine is a short spear you know. Since I was taking lesson in Naginata back in Japan, I can use that knowledge as a base to put it in practice, well, I am grateful if I must say it you see"

Satsuki's replied that way after shrugging her shoulders slightly.

"By the way, back to the topic but, how many of the words that you heard coming from me are in this world's language and how many are in Japanese ? "  
[Satsuki]

The topic went back to the strange interpretation ability which was dwelling

in Satsuki's body due to the divine raiment.

"Currently I hear you speaking in this world's language. But, when I switch the consciousness of my brain to Japan-mode, I hear it in Japanese language. The feeling of sudden switch is really amazing though....."

Rio was smiling wryly as he answered that.

"He~, so that's how it is. Then, could it be that Miharu-chan and the others also feel the same ? "

"I think they do. It seems that you're speaking in this world's language when speaking to Aisia or Cecilia but, isn't it returning to Japanese when I was speaking to Satsuki-san ? "

"It seems huh. There's no discomfort in the movement of my lips huh.....  
Ahm, it seems we're already arrived at the castle, right"

The thing is, he flew slightly slower for the sake of the conversation but, it doesn't mean that you could increase the distance from the place where they established the rock house to the castle.

Just like that they arrived at the castle in the blink of an eye while still in the middle of their conversation.

Though the surroundings were still dim, the faint light of the sun was visible in the horizon of the eastern sky.

"It's beautiful....."

Changing her line of sight to the scenery of the distant place, Satsuki muttered those words as if deeply moved.

Rio hovered far on top of the castle for the sake of her muttering.

Just like that, the two of them silently looked at the horizon.

"Well then, it's farewell for the time being. Let's meet again at tonight's evening party"

## Part 10

Rio told her that after she got tired of enjoying the scenery.

"There are still many things which are hard to talk about at the evening party but, well it's fine I guess. Since I'll come to you first this evening, you'll do your best by becoming my partner, won't you ? "

Satsuki said that with an impish look on her face.

"Though I felt troubled due to the contact seeking attention of the surroundings..... Please be moderate with it"

Rio replied with a wry smile.

"Isn't asking that too much though. It seems that we were pretty conspicuous yesterday, so I think it'll be conspicuous when coming to greet you tonight too"

Satsuki said so while chuckling lightly.

The slight trembling in Satsuki's body was transmitted to Rio's arms.

"Haha....."

Rio let out a dry laugh as he felt a slight power that escaped from his body.

Satsuki immediately looked intently at Rio who made that kind of face.

"Uhm, Thank you"

She immediately averted her face right after saying those words.

In the end, Rio looked at Satsuki.

"Thank me for what ? "

Just what might she feel gratitude about.

Rio voiced the question in his mind.

"For many things. For what you did for Miharu-chan and the others, and, uhm, for my personal matter too....."

Satsuki replied rapidly with a voice which was just loud enough to still be heard.

After clearing her throat with a cough, she showed a slightly serious expression on her face.

"I, really hated everything about this world. I did, till yesterday. That's why it can't be helped that I want to go back so soon"

Satsuki said that with a muttering voice.

"But, it's a bit different now. Me wanting to return still did not change but, I came to like this world a little. It's that kind of feeling"

Satsuki's lips which told him that had somehow become slightly looser.

Was how it looked like to Rio.

"It's thanks to Miharu-san and the others, right ? "

Rio asked that.

Satsuki showed her smile just for a moment and,

"Yeah. I myself find it strange that I feel like I've calmed down after being able to meet with Miharu-chan and the others again "

## Part 11

She answered like that.

But, instantly followed it with,

"But, that's not the only reason. Half of it is thanks to Miharu-chan and the others but, the other half is thanks to you"

And then adding to those words.

"You're the one who told me about them. From you I heard stories and various other things. You took me outside. Brought me to fly in the sky. And you helped me meet with Miharu-chan and the others"

"..... I don't think that these are things that deserve gratitude, though"

Rio said that after a slight pause.

"That's not true and you know it. Thinking about it now, I truly enjoy myself when I'm with you"

Satsuki grinned widely as she said so

"I didn't have any reason to be happy in the evening party, but after meeting you for the first time, I've brightened up? Was that your goal? ..... How should I say it, it's as if I found hope for the first time in this world. Though deep down I still feel gloomy, my train of thought was facing forward before I had noticed "[Satsuki]

The silence stretched for several seconds and then, Satsuki opened her lips again.

"Then, when you carried me for a flight in the sky. I saw, for a fact, that this world was really beautiful. Moreover, compared to me who's always worrying and hesitating, I feel very small. Rather than forgetting about it for a while, I think that I came to like this world a little"[Satsuki]

After finishing what she wanted to say, Satsuki looked at Rio's face with moist eyes.

"..... So I can be glad then"

Rio replied with short words while smiling at her.

Satsuki pouted with her cheeks puffed a little and,

"I've been saying this like it's other people's affairs but, everything is thanks to you, you see. It won't hurt you to give a slightly different reaction, right ? Though I, am really embarrassed "

And glared at Rio with scornful eyes.

"Ahaha..... So, you get slightly embarrassed when telling your gratitude face to face. Say Satsuki-san, you're a surprisingly honest girl, aren't you"

When Rio said that with a pensive look as if slightly troubled by it, he said those words in a joking tone.

"S-So noisy ! That's why I didn't want to say anything ! "

Satsuki exclaimed with flushing red cheeks.

"You didn't have to forcibly go as far as to say your gratitude, you know. Since Satsuki-san being alright is plenty enough for me"

Rio told her that with a wide smile on his face.



## Part 12

"I would feel embarrassed if I didn't express my gratitude ! "

Satsuki said that while averting her face with puffed cheeks again.

Whether she's a strange person or way too serious a person, she's a difficult person.

That was what Rio thought.

But,

"I think it's a nice thing. For Satsuki-san to come to that conclusion. I also have favorable impressions from you"

"Mu~....."

Satsuki pouted lightly.

"Well then, we should go back to your room soon. The sun will rise any moment"

"..... Yes. Please do so"

Satsuki said those words with a slightly pouting tone and then grabbed Rio's clothes tightly in preparation to descend.

"Certainly"

After replying politely, Rio slowly descended from the sky while still holding Satsuki.

The sound of him landing on the balcony of the royal castle lightly resounded.

After Satsuki got off from Rio's arms, a slightly difficult to describe atmosphere drifted between them.

"Well, see you soon. Haruto-kun. Thank you"

As she said so, Satsuki hurriedly entered her room as if to hide her embarrassment.

Rio unintentionally laughed when looking at her retreating figure.

"Yeah, see you soon"

After saying so, Rio slowly floated in the air without waiting for Satsuki's reply.

And then rose quickly to the sky while taking a deep breath of the fresh morning air.

When he reached an altitude in which he wouldn't be seen from above the ground,

"You're there, aren't you, Aisia ? "

Rio suddenly muttered.

Thereupon, Aisia's figure suddenly appeared out of nowhere.

Maybe she vanished by changing into her spirit form.

"You knew ? That I was there"

Aisia asked while lightly tilting her neck.

"Maybe because we seem to share our emotions between the two of us due to our contract, you see. That's why, somehow, I can feel it when you're close to me"

Rio replied gently.

"I see....."

Aisia replied back with a short nod.

When silence descended upon them for a few seconds, maybe because he was somehow slightly troubled with the topic, Rio picked a pendant from his chest pocket and gave it to Aisia.

## Part 13

"Though I missed the chance to pass this a while ago, will you pass this pendant to Miharusan for me ? I'll explain the way to use it later but——"

When Rio was in the middle of his sentence,

"Is this a birthday present ? To Miharuan"

Aisia said those words.

It's spring now if going by the calendar of Strahl region, which coincidentally also overlaps with Miharuan's birthday.

That might be how she guessed so.

Though Rio looked back at Aisia with an astonished face,

"Wrong. Maybe you can call this..... A charm. Though making it was troublesome but, you see. It's possible that we'll take different paths from now on, that's why I made this"

As he said so, he shook his head in denial.

And then, right after that,

"I wanted to give it while the meeting with Satsuki-san was ongoing but, I decided to give it as a birthday present instead. I'll go to buy it today. I'm going to tell her at that time. About myself"

And, following that.

"I see"

Aisia gave a short nod.

After looking at Aisia for few a seconds,

"..... Thank you"

He said his gratitude with a light smile on his lips.

Aisia looked slightly confused.

"You came since you were worried about me right ? "

So, Rio explained the reason for his gratitude.

"Worry..... ? "

Aisia muttered in a low voice as if pondering those words.

"I don't know"

Her muttering was followed by those words.

Though she was still as expressionless as ever, Aisia seemed slightly bewildered.

As if she was completely unable to understand the emotion she had right now.

"I see....."

——In that case, why did you come to me ?

Despite looking at Aisia with gentle eyes, Rio didn't have a need to say those words.

"But ——"

# Part 14

While she said so, Aisia's shook her head lightly as if trying to shake off something.

"But ? "

"I want to be together with Haruto. Thus I came"

Her words were profound in terms of meaning.

But, at the same time it was an extremely simple answer.

"I see, thank you. Aisia"

Rio said his gratitude for a second time.



After being separated from Aisia, Rio, who returned to the mansion of duke Kretia, took a short nap and then woke up to a feeling of sleeplessness.

Since there's no business till the time before the evening party, Rio conveyed to Liselotte that he wants to go to the market place after the morning breakfast.

"I see, it's for shopping huh. Then, please take Natalie along as your guide"

Liselotte attached one of her chamberlain as a guide for Rio.

By the way, when the duty of a guide wasn't entrusted to Natali, Cosette secretly grinded her teeth in frustration which is something that's known by no one but some of her co-workers. [TL : [Vexed expression](#)]

He really didn't know any stores in the capital, since his destination was always the stores for women, Rio was truly grateful for being guided by Natalie.

Thus, the two of them left towards the marketplace of the capital.

Though except for being armed with a sword, the combination of Natalie who wore an apron dress for business[1] and Rio who wore civilian clothes stood out slightly, when seeing them from the side, one could see nothing but the figure of a young and rich master who was shopping along with his maid.

When going around several stores which he's guided to while carefully testing their products, Rio bought the item that he was looking for.

"How about having lunch together to show my gratitude ? "

Rio suggested to have lunch with the two of them as a show of his gratitude for guiding him.

"Such luxury isn't suitable for me. For a lowly employee like me to have a meal together with the guest of my master is just....."

Though Natalie was trying to respectfully decline his offer due to her own standing, she eventually decided to go along after Rio's persuasion[2].

Rio especially chose a first-rate restaurant with a considerably high price.

Though Natalie has wished to enter such a restaurant if only once, her job prevented her from doing so, since she rarely went to the capital too, she had given up on entering such stores halfway.

Natalie was secretly delighted about the fortune that had unexpectedly come upon her.

Following along was her job, although he might be younger than her but, she was definitely going out with someone of the opposite sex.

Naturally Natalie, who had zero males present around her due to her job, was on cloud nine right now.

By the way, she was about to pay her part by herself but, Rio nonchalantly left after ordering the meal to pay the bill just before they left for their seats, so her plans became fleeting and then crumbled away to pieces.

"My deepest apologies. Thank you for treating me....."

## Part 15

When they left the store after finishing their lunch, Natalie bowed to apologize to him.

The flavor was, without the need to say, delicious, their service was favorable, the interior of the store was also perfect.

In addition, with the presence of Rio who's a devoted listener, since he skillfully replied with appropriate words, they could chat with an extremely good atmosphere to the point of forgetting about time.

It's no doubt that the time which she spent in this shop was by far her most fulfilling moment— And yet, Natalie was very embarrassed for completely enjoying that moment[3].

Since usually, she had to serve the guests and stay on the side.

"It's nothing, since I could spend an enjoyable time thanks to Natalie-san. And since I'm truly grateful for receiving your guidance for shopping. This is my way of saying thanks"

Rio said his gratitude with a smiling face.

"Well, shall we go back to the mansion then"

After saying so, Rio turned back and began walking towards the mansion.

Natalie bowed to his back and then followed quietly from behind.

Nothing really happened after they returning to the mansion, before the time for the beginning of the second day of the evening party has come.

Somehow when comparing to the people who attended the previous night evening party, the current ones are giving off a slightly more majestic atmosphere.

"The atmosphere of the venue is slightly noisy, right"

Rio said that while looking at the venue.

There was the figure of Liselotte standing beside him.

"I think they decided to come in a hurry due to the appearance of the new hero-sama"

Liselotte said the reason for the turbulent atmosphere in the venue.

"New hero-sama ? "

Rio whose curiosity was piqued asked her that.

"Yes. They are from Saint Stellar kingdom, the kingdom who normally doesn't make any appearance in foreign events you see. Our country also sent a written invitation to them.

It seems that somehow the hero of that country wanted to participate no matter what, it seems he'll come this evening party"

"I see. No wonder....."

Rio muttered as if he understood the reason.

"Since the notice of their appearance in the castle arrived this morning, it should be because of the various rumor of those quick eared ones. I think they'll make their appearance in the venue very soon"

"..... So that's how it is. It makes you wonder about what kind of person they are, right ? "

Rio decided to investigate about the hero of Saint stellar kingdom.

"It seems the hero-sama is a young man. If I'm not wrong his name is Takahisa Sendou"

"Takahisa Sendou....."

At that moment.

Rio chest was attacked by an uneasy feeling.

He had heard that name before.

That's natural.

Sendou Takahisa——

Since it's the name of Aki's and Masato's big brother, and is someone who might be in a special relationship with Miharuru.



[1] [TL\* : otherwise known as maid uniform]

[i]太刀=curved long sword

# Chapter 99: Second Day of Evening Party, Before

## Part 1

Galwark kingdom's position is in the eastern most part of the Strahl region.

The three big countries in its surrounding are—— Bertram kingdom in the west, Saint Stellar kingdom in the south and, Proxia empire in the north.

In contrast to Bertram kingdom, Galwark kingdom, and Saint Stellar kingdom which have a long history, the recently rising Proxia empire is rapidly enlarging its territories by invading flocks of smaller countries that reside in the north.

The two major countries, Bertram kingdom and Galwark kingdom, seeing this decided to put a check on them by forming a union which caused the international power balance to come to a stalemate, this tensed state has continued for several decades.

But, during such a situation the coup d'état which happened in Bertram just recently is increasing the stimulus regarding international relations.

Moreover, there's an almost too good to be true rumor circulating in society that the shadow of Proxia empire is behind the coup d'état which keeps appearing and disappearing.

The king of Galwark kingdom and the king's government are washing their hands clean from the current government of Bertram kingdom, and a new one has appeared following the coup d'état called 'Restoration' which is led by Flora.

Therefore, the current situation in the eastern part of the Strahl region is a place which will trigger the disturbance\*.

Though there are many smaller countries in the east part of the Strahl region, their international policy is "Take care of your own country's problem".

For example, if a war ever breaks out, those countries will definitely be

involved in it and there's even a few countries which will do a skirmish as the representatives of the true major country.

The evening party sponsored by the Galwark kingdom held in the middle of such international situation, and the debut of Satsuki, the hero, are gathering great amount of attention from the smaller countries in their surroundings.

And tonight, the smaller countries which are under the patronage of the Galwark kingdom all received an invitation, and now, they're doing introductions for the foreign guests in the hall serving as a venue.

In short, the smaller countries are being invited by their superior country, that's why sending their royalty is a way to show their manners and in the end, the ones being introduced are only their royalty.

By the way, the order in which they were introduced was decided according to their relationships or their national power.

And then, while the royalties from the smaller countries are being introduced in order, it's now the turn of a certain princess of a small country to be introduced.

"NEXT IS THE FIRST PRINCESS OF RUBIA KINGDOM, YOUR HIGHNESS PRINCESS SILVI-SAMA ! "

The moment the knight who's doing the introductions said that, the nobles in the hall started making a commotion.

That moment, a girl appeared from the door onto the stage.

There are 5 attendants who are following her.

"P-P— ! PRINCESS KNIGHT KITAAA ! THIS IS SUCH A HUGE REVELATION YOU KNOW ! As expected, I never thought to see a princess knight after I came to this fantasy world"

And then, the one who making merry with such odd tension is the one who's standing behind the door on the stage waiting for his turn, the eyes of the noble are gathering at princess Silvi who was just being introduced.

"Has princess knight, her highness princess Silvi, appeared"

"She truly is a gallant lady, isn't she"

"Yeah, I see her and she's not a least bit inferior to the hero, Satsuki-sama"

"Such a graceful figure is suited as an ornament on the battlefield. She's most suited to raise the morale of the soldiers, right"

And such, the gossip of the male camp somehow became even more passionate than that during the introduction of the other royalties of the smaller countries.

Moreover, even one part of young girls are sending a passionate gaze toward her.

Silvia Rubia is a girl who was born as the first princess of a small country, Rubia kingdom, based from her appearance, her age is still in the later half of her teens.

She is pretty tall for a girl, she has a gallant and beautiful face and shoulder length blond hair — The truth is, she's someone who's overflowing with charm which attracts the public gaze.

Though it seems that, being a young girl, she has a soft and tender body, one can feel it from the way she moves that for a fact she's a powerful military woman.

A simple boorish black ornament is added onto the pure white dress that she's wearing, though it might as well become her battle costume once she wears a sword on her waist, it's still well matched with her atmosphere.

## Part 2

"Everyone has become quite lively, haven't they. Is there a secret to the popularity of her highness princess Silvia ? "

Rio asked Liselotte with a expression of someone interested in a rumor.

Liselotte then looked at Rio with a [Oh my] face.

"Haruto-sama doesn't know about it. Her highness princess Silvia is a well known girl in the neighboring country. The greatest reason for that is because she's acting as a knight despite being royalty. Though it's a bit difficult to imagine for a normal country, it seems she known as princess knight you see"

"I see..... So there was a princess who's acting as a knight, didn't think that I would be so uninformed"

Rio's saying that as if really interested in her.

One could say that he's being curious about the secret to her popularity, but maybe majority of it is due to her personality and her prided beauty.

"Though I happened to hear that she's quite skilled, it doesn't mean that she's active in making heroic effort, right. That's why it's natural that you never heard about her unless you're active in the high-ranking society like a noble"

While the two of them were having that conversation, Silvi's introduction had ended so she was moving to the corner of the stage.

After that were the introductions of several royalties of smaller kingdoms, and finally it's the turn of the foreign guests of larger kingdoms.

Since the first day was led by the introduction of 'Restoration' who already made their appearance in the first day of the evening party, the ambassadors of Saint Stellar made their appearance on the second day.

"Please welcome Saint Stellar kingdom. NEXT TO BE INTRODUCED IS THE HERO, TAKAHISA SENDOU-SAMA AND HER HIGHNESS FIRST PRINCESS, LILYANA-SAMA ! "

Everyone of Saint Stellar is being introduced in the beginning.

A country which normally holds back from appearing has finally made their appearance, the people in the venue start showing interest in the situation.

After waiting impatiently, the waiting ambassadors finally make their appearance, entering from the opened door.

"OOH ! "

Everybody in the venue started looking on the pair of man and woman who are appearing from the door.

Even Rio's quickly squinting his eyes to the man on the stage—— The one he saw in his eyes is the figure of Sendou Takahisa.

(He is.....)

Maybe it's not just his imagination seeing him somewhere.

They have never met.

Never spoken to each other.

But, though just a while, there's the moment where he sees him from a distance.

The memory of that time hasn't faded, even now, it was etched vividly into Rio's mind.

## Part 3

"He's the hero-dono of Saint Stellar kingdom huh. Seeing from his appearance, he's quite young huh"

"Yeah, I can feel his majestic dignity. Coupled with his appearance, he's basically perfect"

The murmuring conversation is resounding in the entire hall to confirm the appearance of Takahisa as a hero.

Coiling around Takahisa's body is etiquette clothes which are concentrating on silver design with blue as it's accent color. [TL : Rio = Kirito , Takahisa = Eugeo, is this a death flag?]

His height is around the later half of 170 cm, slightly shorter than Rio.

He has a well ordered and clean appearance, along with a refreshing short hairdo and the fact that he's scattering his smile in the entire hall with a puffed chest.

His figure is surely adequate to call him a young noble or an adequate youth.

"Nevertheless..... Her highness princess of Saint Stellar is truly beautiful huh"

"Yeah, though I heard that she's a beauty, to think that she's this beautiful....."

Now, the nobles are focusing on the girl who's walking beside Takahisa.

Lilyana Saint Stellar—— The first princess of Saint Stellar kingdom and the one who's travelling to act as Takahisa's manager.

Her long sparkling golden hair, her pale yellow dress, gentle and kind appearance and then her graceful conduct which made one feel she has ladylike manners, are not exaggerating to say that she's the personification of an ideal beauty.

Though Flora is by no means less beautiful than her, Lilyana is emitting the presence of an expert in social life more than Flora is.

All male nobles in the venue are gulping in the presence of this angelic-like beauty.

"Nevertheless, she is everyone's beauty even in the presence of the ones who are accompanying her"

"Yeah, she really is the flower. Dear me, everyone is just....."

Though there's around ten people who are falling behind Takahisa and Lilyana, almost all of them are woman.

The people who are following a royalty as ambassador of another country probably have quite high standing in contrast to just men.

"NEXT TO BE INTRODUCED IS BERTRAM KINGDOM'S ANTI-GOVERNMENT ORGANIZATION, 'RESTORATION', THE HERO, HIROAKI SAKATA, ALONG WITH HER HIGHNESS SECOND PRINCESS OF BERTRAM KINGDOM, FLORA BERTRAM"

Following the introduction, the head camp of 'Restoration' made their appearance starting from Flora and Hiroaki.

But, maybe because the appearance of Takahisa and Lilyana, or because they were already introduced last night, they're completely robbed of attention.

The noise made wasn't as much as yesterday.

Hiroaki's looking at the venue with pouting lips as if slightly dissatisfied.

And then he's glaring at Takahisa who's still basking in attention of the surrounding.

Thereupon, Lilyana who's noticing his line of sight is sending a full smile at Hiroaki.

"....."

Hiroaki's taken aback and showing an astonished face, and then starts blushing.

He's showing a slightly loose smile and then nodding back at her.

After that, Hiroaki's sending a fleeting glance at Lilyana to the point of forgetting about even Flora by his side.

When Satsuki and the royalties of Galwark kingdom made their appearance,



the second day of the evening party officially begins.



## Part 4

The evening party also leaves time for a pleasant talk.

"Haruto-kun"

Satsuki who appeared out of nowhere suddenly called Rio.

"Hello there, Satsuki-sama"

Rio's bowing respectfully while showing an expression as if being surprised.

"Nice to meet you, Satsuki-sama"

Liselotte also goes to greet her with a sweet face on her.

"Nice to meet you too, Liselotte-sama. Can I borrow him for a while ? "

Satsuki's breaking the ice by going straight to the point.

Since a slightly unforeseen situation happened just now.

Though Satsuki was already supposed to come and talk to Rio, she feels the need to talk with him in the matter of Takahisa.

"Yes. Of course you can but, you two have became quite close, haven't you ? "

Liselotte asked with a surprised expression.

"Yes. At first it was because of his story I heard about the place where his parents were born, and then we hit it off during that conversation. We couldn't talk for too long yesterday that's why I was thinking about talking to him again"

Satsuki's replying to her with a smile on her face.

"The story about the birthplace of Haruto-sama's parents. .... Uhm, if possible may I hear about that too ? I'm also slightly interested in the foreign land"

Liselotte was asking as if trying to see the situation.

Though Rio and Satsuki are slightly worried about what they have told her, the matter of inquiring regarding the subject of conversation is rude and

unbefitting for a lady.

Nevertheless, the girl called Liselotte wasn't the type of girl who have a unreserved personality to the point of looking enviously at the two of them who have become intimate with each other.

That's why she realized that fact and asked to be added to their conversation.

Moreover, she also wanted to use this evening party to get closer to Rio.

"EH? Yeah, that's okay. Uhm....."

Satsuki sent a fleeting glance at Rio as she's troubled by how to answer her.

(..... How did it come to me ? )

Rio's catching her signal while keeping his smile.

After coming along with Liselotte to this place, though he's clearly troubled and unable to talk about the main issue with Satsuki, there's no way he can bring himself to tell "Please refrain from our conversation" to her.

He immediately thought about the suitable reply to refuse this degree of request.

The matter of accepting will just come naturally when it comes to Liselotte's request.

It's just that, the truth is, he wants to discuss about what he wants to do and share information with Liselotte for now.

He has no choice but to let her in on their conversation for a while if she's coming along and then make a proper excuse in the middle.

That's his decision,

## Part 5

"Yeah, though there's nothing wonderful which I could tell in my story, I don't mind that you know. I by all means welcome you if you have an interest in my parent's birthplace"

Rio decided to agree to her request for the time being.

It seems that Satsuki also understands that it can't be helped but, she displayed a slightly vexed expression.

"But, before that, may I have a conversation regarding the private matter with Satsuki-sama from yesterday? This conversation is slightly private after all. I think that it'll end in 2, no 3 minutes though....."

Rio's bowing lightly while telling her that with a apologetic tone.

And sending a fleeting gaze at Satsuki while doing so.

Though Satsuki's slightly surprised for a moment when their eyes met,

"Uhm, yeah. It's definitely slightly embarrassing matter to be heard..... Maybe"

She's agreeing right away with a slightly awkward tone.

"This was definitely a discourtesy. If that's the case I'll take some distance for the time being"

Liselotte said that while placing her hand on her lips, expressing her surprise in a elegant way.

The matter about her, trying to join the conversation just now when she didn't hear the full content of their story, might be to the level of an extremely shameless person.

Liselotte's laughing in a reserved manner and then took a few steps back.

"Thank you very much"

Rio and Satsuki are bowing lightly.

Though he feels really guilty to send her away like that, they're walking till

they reach a place in which their conversation won't be heard from where Liselotte is.

"How could you, well, that kind of quick wittedness is really effective right. Geez, I couldn't even tell such a barefaced lie you know"

Satsuki said those words with a astonished voice halfway through her sentence.

"The society is hard right. It's the secret for success"[Rio]

Rio's replying with a wry smile.

"Though I'm happy about your praise, now is not the time for that. Let's get down to business quickly" [Rio]

"You're right. .... I think you already know but, it's about the hero of Saint Stellar kingdom. He's the big brother of Aki-chan and Masato-kun you know"

"Yeah, I'm aware of that. Do you already have a plan to get into contact with him ? "

"Pretty much. Even so, don't tell him about Miharu-chan and the others yet. I felt that he has to gain your approval first, since there's that princess by his side, we couldn't just talk to him. With that we will briefly greet him and tell him to meet again later"

"That's right..... As for me, I think there's no reason to not tell him, he's someone thought as a brother by Satsuki-san after all. Of course it's better if we're proceed carefully"

Rio told her that with a loose tone.

"You're right. That's absolutely right. I also think along that way but....."

## Part 6

Satsuki's showing a pensive look while nodding at him.

Her hesitation is going on for a few seconds.

"Maybe Takahisa will be strongly insisting on taking the three of them along with him. Since he's, how should I say, someone who truly cares about his family. He really cherishes both Aki-chan and Masato-kun"

Told that as if slightly troubled by it.

And then, Rio's guessing what Satsuki's worrying about.

"You already told Miharuru-san and the others about the risk of being together with the hero who belongs to a country, right ? "

Rio asked her.

"..... Yeah"

"In that case, afterwards is what they want themselves you know. Takahisa-san is also included in that factor of their choice. We're telling them what they have to worry about, we can't do nothing but leave them with what they think, and that is including him. I'm also in a similar position with Satsuki-san. It's because they really want to meet Satsuki-san"

Rio's gently telling her as if trying to persuade her.

Rio absolutely has no knowledge about what kind of person someone called Sendou Takahisa is.

But, he feels that Takahisa isn't a bad person since Aki and Masato are missing him.

In addition, above all else, Takahisa is their big brother.

If he asks whether they want to meet him, naturally they'd want to.

After all he's sure that Miharuru really wants to meet him too.

If it's the case, naturally it's his duty to set up his reunion with them, Rio decided that in his heart.

Since he didn't want to act while ignoring their own will without a reason, otherwise it'll make them completely like a bird in the cage.

"You're, right. Come to think of it, after explaining the situation doesn't that mean that we have to set a reunion between him and Miharu-chan and the others. Maybe I'm a bit too worried"

Satsuki's lowering her eyebrows as if troubled while saying.

"I've decided to cause you a bit more trouble again but, can I ask you to set a secret meeting again like last night ? "

"Of course"

Rio's nodding while smiling at her.

"But, the contact of the siblings should be easier to be done from Satsuki-san's side rather than from my side. That's why may I ask for your help in that regard ? "

"I don't mind to do that but, he's basically acting together with the princess during the evening party right. If we're aiming at him, it might be better to do that at the dancing time like yesterday right ? "

"Certainly. Next is to create a time if possible by saying that you want to talk as someone of the same world after the evening party. Other than that is whether it's possible to talk with just the two of them, she shouldn't be so bad to the point of hindering the reunion of a fellow friend in public right[i]"

"You're right. I should try it after this. It'll be a gain if I can get time to have a proper conversation with him"

Satsuki's chuckling with "fufufu" as she says those words.

"Well then, that's for this discussion. If possible, could you introduce the two of us after you dance with him ? "

"That's depending on the defense of the princess but, I'll try"

## Part 7

After their conversation reached that far, they're turning around toward Liselotte.

"Thank you very much for waiting. Liselotte-sama. We're done with our discussion"

"I don't mind about such things you know. Since it's my unreasonable request after all"

Liselotte told him that with soft voice.

Rio's responding with a slight nod.

"Well then, it was the story about the birthplace of my parents right"

After that, Rio decided to tell Satsuki and Liselotte about Yagumo region.

Though the subject of the conversation is just on the surface information, Satsuki and Liselotte are especially interested in the subject regarding food cultures.

"The grains which become the staple food are something that gained from threshing the seeds of the plant they call rice-plant. As for the thing which they're using for seasoning, they're using solid ones or liquid which are made from fermentation of other types of grains"

So Rio's telling them.

Those are obviously rice, miso and, soy-sauce[shoyu].

An inquisitive light litted in Satsuki and Liselotte's eyes.

"..... It's just a probability but, it seems like those are similar to the ingredients in my motherland"

Satsuki's saying so in a low voice.

"Is that so ? It's the ingrendients called rice, shoyu and, miso you know. Though rice is commonly eaten after being boiled, you can give it flavor by cooking it with other ingredients"



So, Rio's pronouncing the name of those ingredients with proper noun in the Karasuki region language[ii].

Satsuki who's bestowed a special translation ability due to her divine raiment understood the meaning of those words right away in Japanese.

"Aah, as I thought ! It's the same. This world have it too"

Satsuki's expression is turning brighter with a "PA".

Maybe she wants to eat Japanese food in this world too but,

"Unfortunately those ingredients are not widespread in Strahl region"

Rio's smashing that hope while smiling wryly.

Though Satsuki dropped her shoulder without hiding the expression of disappointment,

"..... Uhm, Liselotte-san who's managing a firm deals with this kind of commodities right ? "

She's looking at Liselotte while asking her with a hope filled expression.

"..... Probably but, I've the idea regarding the manufacturing process of the seeds of the grains. But, it seems that Haruto-sama is looking for the cooking method— And not the edible ingredients to cook right"

Liselotte's shaking her head as if feeling disappointment.

To tell the truth, there was a period in which Liselotte was also racking her brain in order to get those ingredients.

First of all, after searching over the huge Strahl region, only something similar to rice did she manage to find.

The cultivation of wheat is immensely popular amongst the grains landlord in Strahl region, the cultivation of rice-plant is nothing but just a small part of it but, it's not that difficult to find it if she's using the power of Rikka firm.

## Part 8

And then, though she finally got her hands on the rice that she died for, the result is the fact that the rice isn't what Liselotte was expecting for.

The rice that have exceptionally cultivated in one part of area almost have no stickiness along with large grains, that's why the cooking method is mainly used as ingredients of soup or salad.

In short it's completely unsuitable to be eaten like the rice that was preferred by Japanese.

Nevertheless it's possible to eat it as a porridge and, Liselotte actually cultivated it in Almond.

On the other other hand, she completely couldn't find anything in regard to miso and shoyu.

Though she more or less tried to reproduce it, she decided to immediately abandon it seeing that she's completely lacking in terms of obtaining the ingredients and the fungus needed for it's manufacturing.

"Is that so. Though it seems that rice have no flavor in itself when you just boil it normally, maybe because it has suitable stickiness, soft and, nice gloss, it have the most outstanding affinity when eaten together with a side dish that has a dark flavor"

Rio's replying in a way that is stirring the appetite of Liselotte and Satsuki.

"....."

The two in the woman camp are swallowing their saliva at the same time.

They might be recalling the flavor of their hometown when they hear the story about food from Rio.

It's only natural for them to yearn for the taste of hometown after living in the foreign place for a long time.

Rio understands their feeling very well since he's also practically experiencing it.

Now he's wondering what will become of the two women in front of him if they know that he's practically eating dishes which are made from those ingredients on a daily basis.

(I get this feeling that it'll turn into something troublesome)

Even if he explained that he has those ingredients which can't be procured in Strahl region, he thinks that it's an extremely troublesome matter to explain about the route to get those ingredients.

If he's explaining that, Rio will be at lost if he didn't make any kind of reference regarding the movement till Yagumo region.

Though he feels that it's okay to tell them about that for a moment, he decided not to tell them.

But, when he's looking at the two beauties who are tightly squeezing their lips as if getting their appetite stimulated while having that distant look in their eyes, an indescribable feeling of guilt is gushing forth in him.

*Maybe I'm a bit too mean to them.*

He's trying to make a minimum atonement while feeling that way.

(Well, should I make it for them..... If I have the time that is)

Rio made a vow in his heart.

Thus, accordingly.

"Satsuki-senpai"

The voice that called Satsuki name is resounded.

There's no one but one person who will call Satsuki with "-Senpai" attached as suffix on her name in this evening party.

Rio and co's turning toward the owner of that voice.

"I'm surprised since you just suddenly vanished you know. There was something that I want to talk with you"

As expected, standing on there was the hero of Saint Stellar kingdom, Sendou Takahisa.

Lilyana, the princess of the said kingdom was also snuggling closely to him.

Also, several girls who's their escort was standing on a distance on their surrounding.

Almost at the same timing,

# Part 9

"You're vanishing at your own convenience again huh, Satsuki....."

Michael Galwark, the second prince of Galwark kingdom was also coming toward them.

Charlotte Galwark, the second princess of Galwark kingdom is also by his side.

"Yo. What's the matter, everyone is gathering in this place"

Adding to that is the appearance of Sakata Hiroaki and Flora Bertram as the finishing touch of it.

This might be a prank of fate, 3 powerful countries along with their heroes which attending the evening party are making their appearance.

Having noticed that things were turning into a troublesome matter, Rio's quietly sighing inside.



Why did it turn out this way.

Currently, Rio suffered inside due to the situation he's pitted into.

When he's sending a fleeting glance at the stand by place of the dancing space which is located in the center of the hall, he can see that the two of Satsuki and Takahisa are currently in a deep talk about something there.

He already knows the fact that the relationship between Satsuki and Takahisa is that of an old friend.

Therefore there's nothing sort of a unnatural feeling in the fact that they're dancing together.

After a simple conversation with all of the people who are currently present, when Satsuki's invited him for a dance, Takahisa easily agreed to her proposal.

The flowing of that conversaiton was convenient even for Rio but— —

(Why am i in this kind of place ? )

Rio who's left in that place tasted a hard to describe feeling.

The reason was the line up who was gathering and ended up as his conversation partner.

Sakata Hiroaki, Flora Bertram, Lilyana Saint Stellar, Charlotte Galwark, Michael Galwark.

One of them is a hero while the other four are royalty of a powerful countries.

In the first place, he himself who's attending this evening party where royalties and titled nobles are gathered is sticking out like a sore thumb but, isn't this a bit too far for himself to be mixed with such a line up?. [TL : Are you forgetting the fact that you're A ROYALTY yourself]

Though unofficial, Rio himself is a royalty of a far distant foreign country but, in fact it's meaningless since he himself doesn't have self-awareness as royalty.

Even if it's just a little Liselotte who was accompanying by his side is a bit of relief to him.

Though the person herself is a daughter of a powerful noble——

"It seems that you became extremely intimate to Satsuki aren't you. What was your name again ? "

The second prince of Galwark kingdom, Michael was asking Rio.

"My name is Haruto, your highness"

Rio's introducing his name with a smile on his face.

Michael is looking at him with a appraising look while humming and then,

"..... I see. It seems Satsuki's mood also changed for better after talking with you yesterday. I saw that she's brighter than her usual self today. If you like it, please come to have a conversation with her again"

He said that with a slightly moody look on his face.

"Ha. It's my pleasure"

## Part 10

While accepting his request Rio can't help but to feel complicated inside.

Since he thought that Michael probably wasn't too pleasant with him interacting with Satsuki.

"It was because for some reason Haruto-sama's parents was emigrant from Yagumo region. Me and onii-sama also heard the story when you met with Satsuki-sama"

So Charlotte's adding one thing after another with a bright smile on her face.

"Certainly. It's as her words"

Its of little significance and he doesn't have the obligation to it either.

Refusing a request like this which was requested from royalty is hard.

Though whether it's really a request as a means or just a lip service, only Charlotte knows, it's not a bad offer when thinking that he can easily meet with Satsuki from now on after being permitted by them.

"And Liselotte will come too right. I want to enjoy a tea time with you again"

"Thank you very much. I'll gladly attend too"

Etc, right on the side of Rio and Liselotte who are conversing with the two royalties of Galwark kingdom, Hiroaki was adresssing to Lilyana.

"Hiroaki-sama is such great gentlemen aren't you"

Lilyana's letting out a chuckling laugh while saying so.

"Is that so. We can do this kind of talk as much as you want you know"

Hiroaki was laughing carelessly with a happy expression.

Since no matter what he's talking about Lilyana will give an appropriate reaction, Hiroaki's ways of talking are also brighter than usual.

"Well then, please tell me more stories. Since I'm myself a boxed daughter who's ignorant to the ways of the world, I'm really happy that I can talk this way without constrained feelings with Hiroaki-sama"

"Aah, I see so that's how it is. Nevertheless, where should I be starting from....."

He wants to offer the topic which he deemed she'll be interested in as well but, nothing short of the interesting topic coming out now when he's truly eager for it.

And then, when Hiroaki's worrying about what he's gonna talk about,

"Then, may I ask for an interesting story from Flora-sama as well ? "

Lilyana proposed that maybe because she noticed Flora who's listening quietly on Hiroaki side.

"F-From me ? Uhm, that's right"

Flora's loss for an answer when she is suddenly poked by such a proposal.

She's showing a pensive look on her face and then,

"..... Uhm, I thought the story regarding the bathtub of Hiroaki-sama's world is interesting"

Flora said that timidly soon after that.



## Part 11

"A~h, bathtub huh. It's because the people of this world don't immerse themselves in the bathtub huh"

Hiroaki's talking as if deeply moved.

"Bathtub huh. Come to think of it, Takahisa-sama is also——"

When Lilyana was about to say something.

"B-BURGLAR ! "

A voice that resembled a scream was resounding inside the hall.

[i] [TL : I get this feeling that they'll become an amazing couple if not for the cockblock called Miharu]

[ii] [TL : Maybe this will be explained later]

# Chapter 100: Second Day of Evening Party, After

## Part 1

The inside of the hall became noisy due to the sudden visit from unwelcomed visitors.

"THEY'RE HERE ! "

"THEY'RE HERE TOO ! "

The two groups of intruder appeared from two passages.

One group came from the door, and the other group from the window, and then with quick movements they invaded the inside of the hall.

They wore black garments on their bodies and white masks to hide their faces.

"UWAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAA ! "

In the blink of an eye, the nobles in the surroundings panicked.

The wave like chaos kept spreading wider.

"DON'T COME ! "

"RUN ! "

The inside of the hall had fallen into a mess as everyone tried to be the first to escape.

"CALM DOWN ! "

"PLEASE LET US TO PASS ! WE'RE GOING TO REPEL THOSE INTRUDER ! "

Even the guard knights patrolling inside the hall couldn't move very well since they were being pushed back by the crowd.

Though those knights had undergone training in preparation for emergency cases, it's not the same for the many nobles in the venue.

Of course amongst them were some who had received combat training, some of them were even recognized for their military service, but those were the minority.

Obviously, because of the group causing the panic being so irrational, it was inevitable that they would lose the initiative to deal with the emergency.

In the first place it's already abnormal for such a group to be able to bypass the defenses of the castle and to march into the venue without anyone noticing it before hand.

Since it seems they have taken measures against abnormal situations due to the strict defense outside of the venue.

The attendance was strictly controlled, so they deployed a minimum number of knights inside the hall for the sake of appearance.

When it comes to that, it's natural to think that there are collaborators of those intruder amongst the invited guest.

But, now was not the time to find the culprit.

"Move as planned before. Now spread ! "

The person who seemed like the leader of the group gave an order, the intruder then spread into groups of two people.

It seems they're trying to do some kind of outrageous crime.

Their nimble movements indicate that they've trained for this beforehand.

Therefore, no hesitation could be felt from their actions.

They just pushed through the momentary gaps that were created due to the chaos——

They needed to act quick, it was just a matter of time before the guarding knights in the venue regain their freedom of movement and then turn around to intercept the intruder.

Every second counts for these intruder and might be the difference between victory or defeat.

The intruder ran straight through the inside of the hall with more nimble

movements and superior strength than normal people would have.

"HYIIIIII ! "

The crowd of nobles was neatly separated which helped the movement of the intruder.

The knights pushed through the wave of nobles while the intruder kept advancing smoothly through the path made ready for them.

There were some knights trying to disturb the intruder hiding amongst the crowd of people but,

## Part 2

"GA!"

They fell to the ground due to intruder stabbing their chest with a knife.

Though there were knights trying to move by their own discretion, it was useless since the intruder individual combat ability was high. That's how catastrophic the current situation was.

The knights were overwhelmed since the two groups of intruder could perfectly coordinate against single knights.

Moreover the one-on-one combat ability of the intruder and the knights was more or less equal.

Although several knights had already fallen to the ground, the intruder would advance unhindered if left as it is.

By the way, everyone, excluding the venue guards of the Galwark kingdom, were prohibited from taking along their weapon to the hall.

Even the weapons carried by the defense knights are only a club and a knife. That's because they keep in mind that they only need to arrest the criminal. So it's all in the premise of not causing casualties, because in the middle of a crowd something that's too long would be hard to swing and would most likely hurt those around.

Against the intruder who had received plenty enough training to pierce their way through the crowds, the defensive side was obviously in an extremely disadvantageous position.

The intruder made the best use of the little time they had, till the knights could cope with their movements, to run towards their target with all of their power.

They were heading towards——,

"O-OY, They are heading towards us ! "

Hiroaki shouted in a shrill voice.

That's right, the intruder were gathering where Rio and the others were.

(Is it because the one they're aiming for is amongst us ? )

Rio guessed their intention in that moment.

Nevertheless, the list of people who could be their target was too large.

It could be the royalties of these powerful countries, or the hero, Hiroaki, or maybe the CEO of Rikka firm and the daughter of a powerful noble, Liselotte.

Maybe because he was always secretly monitoring other people's tendencies, he could pinpoint the target without any hesitation.

"W-What is this ? What are the defense knights doing ? "

Michael said that with a voice that carried a hint of hysteria.

"O-Onii-sama"

Charlotte, frightened, cuddled Michael.

The intruder drew near from every direction as far as the eye could see.

"Kuh ! They're coming from all directions ! Form a circle ! "

Five knights hiding in the vicinities who were acting as the secret bodyguards of the royalties formed a circle.

Even with a glance one could tell that the number of intruder were easily more than 10 people.

The number of the intercepting side was obviously lacking.

The color of impatience rose on the faces of the knights.

## Part 3

"Everyone, please gather here behind our circle ! You must not by any means move from there ! "

One of the knights said so and urged everyone to take shelter behind their encirclement.

Lilyana, who had a conversation with Hiroaki, didn't notice that the three noble daughters of Saint Stellar kingdom were getting closer. [TLC: We're not sure if the author wanted a third person perspective or if it was Lilyana who didn't notice.]

"This way, Lilyana-sama"

"Y-Yes"

The noble daughters of Saint Stellar kingdom called her with a calm voice and then brought Lilyana to the center of the knights' encirclement.

The four of Michael, Charlotte, Liselotte, and Rio were already there.

"I-It's a joke right ! How can this happened. So many of them are coming at once ! "

On the other side, Hiroaki was standing still with a pale face while shouting.

The approaching intruder were clearly moving with ill intents.

Hiroaki never had any true combat training since coming to this world, only mock battles, and sometimes, things can be different from mock battles where one can be as moody as they want.

It's not like he was practising some sort of martial art back in Japan, nor was he ever attacked by hoodlums.

So it can be said, this is the first real combat for him.

It might be strange if he were to not experience any fear, even though he gained these special powers as a hero, considering all the approaching opponents were holding edged weapons.

"Hi-Hiroaki-sama. Don't hinder the knights by standing still. Please, quickly, take shelter behind their backs"

Hiroaki kept standing still despite Flora calling his name in panic.

His head spinned and his legs trembled in fear.

There's no way he could hear Flora's words.

"Liselotte-sama, please go behind the knights along with the other royalties. I'll go help the knights"

Rio told Liselotte, stepping out while saying those words with a calm voice.

Though he didn't feel like protecting the royalties was the right thing to do in this situation, he didn't know what he would say to them later if he ran away alone right now.

Moreover if those intruder ever breached the line of defense set by the knights, Rio would still have to fight against them.

So, if they successfully breach the line of defense the situation developing into free-for-all combat would be inevitable.

In that case the situation might be better if he willingly goes to the front line.

That was his judgement.

"G-Godspeed ! "

Liselotte told behind Rio.

For her, who had basically witnessed Rio's fighting power, him joining the line of defence was extremely reassuring.

"Let us use 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)' for you" [TLC: Atleast I get to translate them the way I want in the LN...]

The noble daughters of Saint Stellar kingdom said so.

"Let me help you too"



# Part 4

Liselotte announces her intentions without hesitation.

'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)' as its name suggests is magic that will protect one from external attack by enclosing the target in a barrier of magical power.

It's defensive ability depends on the covered area and the amount of loaded magical power, the consumption of magical power for continuous use was large, thus it was hard to use any other magic.

But she only needed to hold off until additional knights came as reinforcement, so this magic was the most appropriate one for the current situation.

When spreading the barrier vast and thin, it'll become a simple barricade.

"HIROAKI-SAMA ! PRINCESS FLORA ! COME HERE QUICKLY ! "

Liselotte shouted at them seeing that they were late to react.

Hiroaki's body was trembling.

When he glanced behind him, he saw people clustering together to take shelter,

"R-RUN, RUN ! "

Hiroaki turned around and started to run while shouting loudly.

"KYAAAAA ! "

Hiroaki ran into Flora, who then lost her balance.

Meanwhile, a fight had already started right by her side——



"I have come to assist. Since coordinating would be hard, I'll attack who ever I can"

Rio said that briefly after slipping into an open spot between the knights forming a circle protecting the royalties.

Thanks to Rio joining the formation they can now cover more area than before.

"T-Thank you ! "

Both knights next to Rio are showing delighted expressions on their faces.

"I'll take care the two coming at me"

Right after saying that, Rio steps forward and closes the distance between him and the two intruder.

Of course he doesn't forget to secretly raise his physical abilities with spirit arts.

"Bow ! " [TLC: The weapon you use in archery]

One of the two intruder running in that group shouts.

They have no equipment anywhere close to resembling a bow.

(They're faking it ? Or have they prepared a weapon ? No——)

The next moment, the two intruder are forming a front-back line formation——,

"Fuh ! "

The burglar in the front is lunging his knife with his right hand.

But, Rio calmly brushes that lunge away with his left hand.

And just like that, with a flowing-like movement, he drives in a strong blow towards the abdomen of his opponent with his right hand.

# Part 5

"GA..... KAH"

A unintentional shriek leaks out from the man’s mouth before his body falls down.

At the same time, the next burglar is making his appearance from the back of the first one, and rushes to attack.

He might be acting as a backup to be certain that Rio dies. [TLC: Gets killed/ dies... same thing]

Perhaps the so called "Bow" was an order that was already decided beforehand as some sort of a signal.

The other man rushing from the back of the fallen man sends another surprise attack at Rio.

He lunges from Rio’s blindspot firmly holding his knife while aiming at his heart.

If that hit lands, it would mean instant death for Rio, there would be no escape from it.

But, Rio’s swiftly steps to the side.

The lung sent by the burglar just barely grazes his clothes.

"WHA ! "

Under the mask, a surprised voice leaked out.

Rio, now standing next to the burglar, quickly grabs the intruder arm, leaving no room to break free.

And just like that Rio pulls the burglar forward, gaining control over their entire body, and then finishes it by suddenly overturning the burglar body\*. [TL\* : If you’re confused, this is aikido throwing] [TLC: This sentence will give me nightmares...]

Following it by elbow striking the burglar still rotating in the air,

"GAH....."

The burglar landed on the floor like a sack of potatoes, and he then lost his consciousness.

It's only been few seconds since Rio started fighting.

After giving a glance to confirm that his opponent lost their consciousness, Rio pay close attention to the knight still fighting near him.

It seems that some reinforcements have already come but, there are still people who are fighting the intruder alone.

The knight to Rio's left was also one of them.

Though it seems that he somehow can face against two intruder alone, there's a knife lodged into his right arm.

(I should cover for him huh)

After thinking about it for a moment, Rio decided to help him, but the moment he decided so,

"Kyaa"

Behind the knight whose right hand is stabbed, Flora falls down due to Hiroaki running into her.

Hiroaki failed to notice that he bumped into Flora and kept going toward the last line of defence where Liselotte and the noble girls of Saint Stellar kingdom were gathering.

"Kuh, I'm at my limit ! Make a protective wall. 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)'"

Right after Hiroaki has come in, the noble girls of Saint Stellar and Liselotte activated the 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)' .

The barrier of magical power is expanding as if to protect Hiroaki and the royalties who are taking shelter.

"CEH"

Clicking their lips, the intruder who have managed to bypass the first line of defence, the knights, were just one step away from the nobels.

Though the barrier is not so hard to break considering how big it is, it'll still take some time.

The pursuing knights are sure to come at them during that time.

On the other hand, at that time,

## Part 6

"GUH"

Behind them, Flora's scream could be heard for just a moment, and then the consciousness of the injured knight was snatched away.

Making use of that opportunity, the burglar threw away the wounded knight.

"KYAA"

The knight bumps onto Flora and both of them fall to the floor.

Even the three intruder who were stopping right before the 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)' were turning around and heading toward Flora.

(Could it be that they're narrowing down their target to her for now)

It's even including the intruder who were pushing down the the injured knight, the four intruder are for sure getting closer to defenseless Flora.

The one closest to her was the knight who was pushed down by the burglar.

Rio runs towards that burglar in only a moment after strengthening his legs with spirit arts.

"!!!!!"

Being hindered by Rio when he was just one step away, the male burglar was gulping in shock.

Rio's destroying the posture of the man by seizing his clothes at that moment.

And then flinging the burglar with all his might, aiming at a burglar who was behind and to the right of him.

The man is blown away with unexpected force, and magnificently hits the body of the approaching burglar.

"GUH"

Being unable to stop the unexpected impact, the two intruder crash into the magical barrier Liselotte and the others are casting.

Rio quickly turns around and then faces toward the two intruder who are attacking Flora from her left side.

Stomping hard on the ground, he instantly enters the gap between Flora and those two intruder.

"WE'RE NOT HIS OPPONENT"

When one person says that, the intruder were separating to cover Rio on both sides.

It's their strategy. Whichever Rio fought first, the other will get Flora while he's busy fighting.

"I'LL BECOME HER SHIELD ! DON'T WORRY ABOUT HER. PLEASE BEAT ONE OF THEM FOR THE TIME BEING ! "

The knight who fall along with Flora is shouting so.

Maybe he's literally planning to put up his body to stop one of the burglar.

It's an admirable chivalric soul.

Though Rio didn't have such a soul in his heart, he was admiring him.

He believes so even while thinking that he didn't want to die at the same time.

"....."

Though Liselotte's feeling troubled whether she should use attack magic, thus cancelling the 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic barrier)', if she misses her shot others might get involved too.

The probability to miss is high since the opponent is fast.

And the intruders would be rushing at them right away if Liselotte leaves an opening for them.

## Part 7

"Liselotte-sama, please keep your 'Barrier Magic of Magical Power(Magic Barrier)' up"

After shouting that, Rio rushed towards one of the intruder.

The worries then vanished from Liselotte face.

"Fu~h"

Maybe because he feels like Flora's guard has resigned already, the burglar who's aiming for her makes a nasal sound as if celebrating his success.

But, the next moment,

"WHA ? "

Rio vanishes from the burglar's field of vision, which shocked him.

The truth is, Rio is moving so fast that he only barely touches the ground. To the negligent burglar it seems as if Rios figure has vanished.

In that moment, Rio grabs the burglar from his leg with powerful force.

And just like that, the burglar can't help but be flung towards another burglar by spirit arts using Rio

"HAH"

Maybe because he had already seen how other intruder were tossed around, the targeted burglar easily avoided the collision with his comrade.

But, that delayed his approach towards Flora.

During that, Rio already reached the burglar to stop his plans.

"CEH"

When the decentralization plan to aiming at Flora got foiled, the burglar clicked his tongue.

The two of them are now facing each other at several steps distance.

"It seems your plan has failed. It seems more than half of your comrades are



arrested too, how about surrendering yourself now ? "

Rio's asking with bone chilling tone.

"WHAT HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR US WHEN WE FAILED IN OUR DUTY IS DEATH ! "

The burglar charged toward Rio as he shouted those words.

He's without doubt ready for his honorable death.

Three stab of knife is coming non-stop at him.

Chest, arm, stomach.

It's piercing the air while letting out "hyuu" sound.

Rio's hand is dancing so fast and brilliantly parrying all those strikes.

"KUH"

A voice of pain is leaking out from the man's mouth.

Despite him using every bit of his strength for the attack just now, he can feel that Rio still has some leeway for parrying it.

But, for a moment, Rio's line of sight moves when he surveys the surroundings.

(Still young huh ! You're too careless boy ! )

## Part 8

The burglar won't miss that opportunity.

In that moment, he closes their distance and then stabs Rio's chest. [TL : Liselotte's gasping at this time]

But.

It's as if Rio has been expecting an attack to come from behind all this time, and he strikes the fist of the man grasping the knife.

"WHA ! "

The man is left dumbfounded by the situation.

And just like that, Rio grabs and twists the man's arm which forces him to release his knife.

Rio goes to, somehow, take control over his opponent and then, in the next moment, topples him over to the floor.

Rio keeps holding down his opponent,

"This is the end"

And told him about the end of the combat.

"BULLSHIT"

Nevertheless, the burglar is still struggling around.

But he is immediately put into sleep after Rio chops the back of his neck.

Rio stands slowly.

(..... Next is, it seems it's alright)

Judging from the surroundings, Rio came to conclusion that he already doesn't have a stage to come out on.

The reinforcement knights are gathering, most of the intruder in their surroundings have fallen to the floor.

After all this, none of the royalties were injured.

The only thing left is for this country to get some information from the captured intruder.

"GAH..... AAah ! "

All of a sudden, the burglar who Rio put to sleep was in pain.

"Oy. Are you okay ? "

Though he called the burglar in panic, the burglar is just pinning his chest, soon after that his body convulses bit by bit, and then completely stops moving.

Rio's checking the man but, his breathing has stopped, his pupils already void, even his heart is no longer beating.

It's just a possibilities but, they're dead.

Why?

He already made sure that his attack won't cause a fatal wound.

When it comes to that, it just natural for him to think that it might have been caused by some sort of a internal or external factor.

Rio quickly tears the clothes of the man with a knife that was on the floor.

Thereupon, he discovered there was a complicated magic equation carved on the area around that man chest.

"Is this..... A magic formula..... ? "

Magic formula—— Though there are some which are unknown even amongst them, it's a magic of which even the research made brands ones as a felony, a forbidden magic, either way, it's effect is way too malicious.

He doesn't even know whether the magic equation carved on the man's chest is truly a magic formula.

But, even if this effect is designated as magic formula, it wouldn't be strange for it to be dangerous magic.

By the way, though the user who carved magic equation on their body can voluntarily invoke magic, the magic equation is carved inside their flesh.

In cases where one invokes magic by carving the magic equation on the

surface of the skins as a tattoo, it can't be categorized as magic.

## Part 9

"....."

After giving a sever glance at the corpse of the burglar, Rio looks at his surroundings while letting out a small sigh.

It seems that somehow the other intruder are also suffering, the battle has ended.

The knights are staring dumbfoundedly at the sudden death of the intruder.

"Uhm, are you okay ? Are you injured ? "

Rio hears Flora's voice right beside him

It seems she used 'Recovery Magic(Heal)' on the injured knight.

Before he knew, Liselotte has already come next to him, being vigilance of the surroundings as if to protect the defenseless Flora.

"Yes, if it's this degree of injury....."

The knight replied respectfully.

He never thought that he would personally receive healing magic performed by a royalty.

So it's natural that he felt nervous.

"I'm already alright. Thank you very much"

The male knight staggeringly stands and then tells his gratitude with tense expression.

"I'm glad then....."

Flora's sighing in relief.

After confirming the recovering of the knight has ended, Liselotte immediately rushes to Rio.

"Haruto-sama. Are you alright ? "

She already knows that he was safe by seeing the combat but, Liselotte can't

help but ask about his condition.

"Yeah, I'm uninjured as you see"

Rio's shrugging his shoulders as he replies to her.

"I'm glad then. The burglar over there is..... ? "

"Yes, he's dead. He has a magic equation carved directly onto his chest.  
Maybe some type of a spell"

So Rio conveyed the result of his own investigation.

"Is that so....."

Liselotte's showing a distressed face.

Following that, her expression changed to a serious one and,

## Part 10

"You saved me, Haruto-sama. If you were not here it might have not just been Flora-sama, but maybe even Michele-sama, Charlotte-sama, and Lilyana-sama would have also been wounded by them "

She deeply bows to Rio.

"It's nothing to feel gratitude towards. I'm just fulfilling my duty as a guard and a man to protect my partner, right ? "

Rio cheeks slowly loosened as he said so.

Liselotte looks at him with slightly perplexed expression and,

"I'm truly glad that Haruto-sama is my partner" [TL : Riajuu just explode!!!]

Said that as a reply with delighted expression.

"U-Uhm, my apologies ! You got into trouble because of me....."

Flora's standing slowly and then bowing to apologize to her.

"Such thing is——"

Just when Rio's about to reply to her.

"Are you okay, Flora ? "

Hiroaki already came and suddenly grabbed Flora's shoulder.

Flora body is trembles with a "twitch".

"Y-Yes. Because Haruto-sama and knight-sama protected me....."

"Rather than that, how did you feel ? I'm worried, you know ? "

Hiroaki said that as if scolding her.

"M-My apologies. I've, always been a klutz....."

Maybe because she thought that it's a criticism, Flora felt despondent.

"A~h, well..... I'm glad that you're okay"

Hiroaki's saying so with a slightly awkward tone.

Maybe because he's at least aware of the fact that he ran away after losing himself.

During their little skit, Rio already went to confirm the death of the other intruder.

"AH....."

Flora who failed to say her gratitude is letting out vanished-like voice.

"I will help too"

Rio also joining the work by mixing along with the knights who are gathering the surrendered intruder to one place.

The number of the intruder beaten by Rio is six, the injured knight beat one, and it seems there are seven others totaling to 14 arrested intruder.

"You too, Liselotte, come here. There might be another intruder around. It's safe if you come to the back"

Hiroaki called to Liselotte who, from nearby, was carefully watching the work of Rio and the knights.

## Part 11

"No, I'm....."

Saying so, Liselotte was glancing at Rio.

But, Hiroaki's seizing her hand and,

"Listen. Don't be so unreasonable"

Saying so while pulling her from the arm.

Maybe because she wasn't be able to withstand his strength,

"\_\_"

Liselotte's slightly grimacing due to light feeling of pain.

She couldn't resist even if she tried since Hiroaki is a man.

Hiroaki didn't notice the change on Liselotte's face.

"Y-Yes"

As a result, Liselotte had no choice but to reluctantly follow Hiroaki to the back.

"But..... That was truly a terrifying capturing skill, wasn't it. He overwhelmed six trained intruder with his bare hands....."

The knight who arm was wounded is earnestly talking about that.

The so called six people were almost half the intruder.

"Hahaha, naturally, trying to cover him when we lack skills will only hinder him"

"He played a really big role in this. This all happened because you received such wound, right"

"For someone to be able to have such skills at his age they would not only need talent but also focus on training, right"

The knights who were looking at Rio's combat praised Rio's exploits in said combat with debacle atmosphere.



Though all of them are still young, they're still older than Rio.

Even so, their tone was fully loaded with respect to him.

Thereupon, to that place,

"Haruto-kun ! "

A girl calling Rio's name could be heard in the vicinity.

There are no other girls who called Rio with "-kun" attached at his name.

Rather, there's no one but one girl who called him with such suffix.

The owner of that particular voice came in front of him faster than he could turn around,

"Satsuki-sama, you're okay, right"

Rio said that with a gentle tone.

Satsuki's approaching Rio with an anxious expression.

"I was not attacked even once. So I'm okay. Rather, it's about you, are you alright, Haruto-kun ? There are no injuries ? "

Satsuki asked with said anxious expression while timidly touching Rio's body.  
[TL : Wait a minute, I don't remember him building Satsuki flag, so how could it suddenly established?]

## Part 12

"As you see, I'm completely uninjured"

"I see, thanks goodness"

Satsuki sighs in relief while still grasping both of Rio's hands.

It's as if she goes limp in one go.

Rio stares at her with his eyes wide open while wondering whether she's truly worrying that much about him.

"Geez, please don't make me worry so much"

"My apologies"

Rio's smiling wryly while apologizing to her.

"Hahaha, and then his princess made her appearance, huh"

And then, one of the knights said that when he saw their exchange from the side.

The surrounding knights also started laughing as if approving that remark.

"Y-You're wrong ! W-We're nothing like that ! "

Satsuki's denied it with beef red face.

Maybe because the tensioned thread also completely snapped, the atmosphere become completely calmed down which made one not think that assailants appeared just a while ago.

Besides the defense knights, maybe it's the effect of no one from titled nobility and royalties who were attending receiving such notable wound from the assailants.

Or maybe thanks to the intruder only targeting the royalties, there are zero casualties besides the assailants.

But, it's also a fact that there would have been casualties if they couldn't hold back the assailants.

"Uhm, then who are they..... ? "

When the situation has calmed down, Satsuki asked that question while glancing at the corpses of the intruder who are lying down on the floor, or rather it's inevitable that it come to her sight with expression as if she's going to escape at any moment.

As she removes the mask of the figure that tumbling on the ground, under the mask is a suffering expression which made her recollect herself like pouring cold water on her head would do.

"Unfortunately I don't know....."

Rio shook his head lightly.

"I see....."

Satsuki face grimaced and seems like she was about to cry at any moment.

That was natural since she saw more than ten people's corpses tumbling around on the floor.

This is the first time in her life seeing this many fresh corpses.

Maybe because she became scared, Satsuki's tightly grasping on the sleeves of Rio clothes.

"Shall we go"

Rio obstructed her line of sight and then gently said those words to her.

"Uhn..... Sorry. Can you lend me your arm for a while ? "

Satsuki asked him with paled face.

If she becomes a hero, she might be getting used to the scenery filled with corpses soon enough.

Something like that was natural, and Satsuki understand that too.

But, for a 17 year old girl like her who was living peacefully in Japan, that was too much of a request for her from understanding till suddenly forced to bear with it.

Because imagination and reality are completely different matter.

# Part 13

"Yes"

Rio nodded without saying anything and just gently presented his arm.

"Thank you"

Satsuki gently seized Rio's arm.

"Satsuki-senpai"

While walking with her head down, a voice called Satsuki's name from ahead of them.

Satsuki slowly raises her face.

Standing in there was Sendou Takahisa.

Lilyana who looks frightened is quietly standing by his side.

He might be coming to confirm the safety of Lilyana first after separating from Satsuki.

"Uhm, are you okay..... Takahisa-kun ? Your face looks pale"

"I'm okay. Uhm, he is..... So that's the case ? "

Takahisa asked with paled face.

But, he can't help but to ask.

It was that kind of expression.

"Uhn"

Satsuki's nodding as her answer.

"I, see....."

Takahisa eyes are slightly trembling.

Just what kind of emotion bottled up inside of his chest.

It wasn't something that can be understood by Rio.

"It's my pleasure to meet you. My name is Sendou Takahisa"

Takahisa bowed his head as he introduced himself.

"My name is Haruto. My pleasure to meet you"

Rio also returned Takahisa greeting with his own simple introduction.

Right after that, they're notified that this day of evening party is interrupted.

Following that is the announcement that tomorrow is the last day of the evening party.

Just like that with nothing more than simple a introduction, the first meeting of Rio and Takahisa met its end.

# Chapter 101: Takahisa's Feelings

## Part 1

The evening party is interrupted after the attack of the burglars.

Since the burglars who're the culprits of this incident has all died due to a spell, they can't gain the information regarding the mastermind or the motive for doing this.

But, it was almost certain that someone has brought along those burglars to enter the castle.

Maybe there was a betrayer amongst their own countrymen, or maybe it's a deed of someone who belongs to another country.

At any rate, Galwark kingdom are desperately trying to get rid of the mud that was plastered on their own face.

But, seeing that there's so many people of various countries which was invited in the castle, it'll also come along with the doubt of what kind of influence behind the culprit when a suspicion is formed.

They can do nothing but to raise their vigilance to maximum inside the castle when it comes to something that can be done by Galwark kingdom.

The soldiers are deployed in semi-battle situation inside the castle, being wary of the intruders from outside aside, they're also making sure that none of the people inside the castle make a suspicious movement.

The guests need a given permit just to leave the castle, it comes to the point that even the people who's working in the castle will be questioned by the soldiers about their identity if they left without a clear reason.

"Haa....."

The sound of a sigh which looks like letting out of the owner's tired spirit is resounding inside the splendid room of the castle which is currently in high alert.

Rio—— The one who let out that sigh is currently sitting on top of a gorgeous bed.

Due to the great contribution in repelling the burglars, it's been decided that Rio won't be back to the mansion of duke Kretia and instead will be staying in the castle.

They're preparing a spacious room to the point that they can't even consider it as a single room, it's comfortable and have a environment where one can spend their time inside without any kind of discomfort but, Rio just can't feel relaxed.

(Don't tell me they're going to go as far as giving me helpers)

Rio's sending a fleeting glance at the wall.

There was two court ladies awaiting over there.

Both are young, and beautiful.

The helper of the guests are the jobs of the head servant and not just job of maid servant and they'll help him as his assistant.

They might be daughters of nobles who was working in the castle as an apprentice.

(..... The schedule is going out of order)

Rio's muttering those words inside his heart while looking at the ceiling of his room.

There might be a great number of soldiers patrolling outside of the doors, and two unfamiliar girls inside the room, he won't even be able to sneak out of the room secretly in this kind of situation.

Though there's some restriction, the guests are allowed to stroll inside the castle but, if Rio were going to stroll inside the castle, undoubtedly the two girls will be following along with him.

In case of him coming to meet Satsuki, he have no choice but to come straight from the front.

Nevertheless, the current him have no official reason to go to Satsuki's room.

(It's not like they're suspecting me but, what the hell is with this kind of treatment)

No matter how much of a benefactor he is to them, in his current situation if it's seen from the country's point of view there's no way they'll leave alone someone who have no clear lineage to stroll alone.

Maybe the helpers are also given a duty as the observers so he won't make a suspicious movement.

Though it doesn't seem that they're in the same room when Rio's sleeping, since he have no complete grasp of the surveillance system, it's better for him to refrain himself from becoming a suspect by making suspicious movements from when he sleeps and so on.

Since there's a possibility of him getting involved with the case of the burglars with just that much if he's making a suspicious movement during this highly alert situation.

But, on the other hand, it's also the fact that he must hurry in this case.

Satsuki became the hero of Galwark kingdom, Takahisa became the hero of Saint Stellar kingdom.

If Takahisa is going back to Saint Stellar, no one will know whether there'll be another chance in their life for all of them to gather together.

Though it's currently not a fixed matter yet due to the tomorrow evening party, at any rate Takahisa's days of staying in Galwark kingdom will be limited.

They have to do so many things during that time.



## Part 2

(Calm down. Let's arrange the situation for now)

He needs to calm himself for the sake of the future course of his action afterward.

The first problem is how far Satsuki have conveyed this matter to Takahisa.

(As long as I'm looking at the situation when I met him last night, he already knows that Miharuru and co is under my protection.....)

He recalled that Satsuki and Takahisa's conversation is profound with meaning before being introduced at each other with Rio.

At that time, Takahisa asked something while pointing at Rio. And then Satsuki's nodding at him.

Rio's expecting that Takahisa already knows that Miharuru and co is under his protection from that conversation.

But, there's not that much time passed since Satsuki and Takahisa's taking a different action till the attack of the burglars.

He's wondering how much information they exchanged during those moments.

There's too many uncertain factors which made him feel uneasy to advance forward inside.

But, it doesn't mean that the situation will be changed to a better one by rushing forward.

Though Rio's situation is practically moving to a completely different direction thanks to the attack of the burglars, an irregularity is part of human life.

In the end a human is just a human, because there's no way they can predict everything that will happen in this world.

(I'll at least do what I can do. Perhaps Satsuki-san will also do something. I have no choice but to wait obediently in this room)

The matter of making an excuse to meet Satsuki from Rio's side aside, it won't be so hard to make an excuse for Satsuki to meet Rio if she's using her position as a hero.

Maybe the one who should make the first move is from Satsuki's side to meet Rio, and from then there's a chance to meet Takahisa.

There's too much risk involved for him to make a strange action when he's still unclear with his current situation.

While thinking about that matter, Rio decided to have a change of pace.

He wanted to give a rest to his body by lying down on the bed but, Rio's nerve isn't so bold to the point that he can feel relaxed with two unfamiliar girls in his room.

(..... Hn ? )

Suddenly he noticed that their line of sight is alightned to him.

They were looking curiously at him who's looking at the ceiling with a listless expression.

Rio's looking toward the girl.

"Was there something on my face ? "

So he asked.

Those court lady suddenly making a surprised face and then,

"N-No—— I-It's nothing. Please forgive our discourtesy"

Saying those words while shaking their blushed face.

## Part 3

"So that it....."

Their conversation ended there.

Their conversation isn't going on.

Rather than that, he also feels uncomfortable due to it.

(Should I talk about something with them ? Though when you say so.....)

The matter regarding to starting a conversation to a guest from their side is a breach of manner but, it's different matter if Rio is the one who's talking to them first.

But, Rio was at a loss since he didn't know what kind of topic he should talk about in this kind of situation since he has no similar experience in entertaining court ladies.

Even so, though the other party are court ladies, they might be daughters of nobles as well.

On the contrary, Rio is a mere commoner.

The people of higher social position is serving the people of lower social position.

That's an extremely contradiction situation.

And then, when Rio is worrying about such a strange and uncomfortable situation, a knocking sound was resounding inside of the room.

"May I enter, Haruto-sama ? "

The voice of a man can be heard from the other side of the door.

"Yes. Please wait a minute"

Rio's getting up from his chair while answering him.

"I'll open the door. Please just wait there, Haruto-sama"

For the sake of avoiding the situation where they're mistaking their priorities,

the court lady is stopping Rio at his place while heading toward the door with a slightly faster pace.

When the door is opened, standing on the other side of the door is a white knight.

He can see the figure of the palace guards who's patrolling around on his background too.

"May I ask your business today ? "

The court lady asked the knight.

"Ha. Takahisa Sendou-sama, The hero of Saint Stellar kingdom, wishes to meet Haruto-sama. Do you want me to accompany you to meet him ? "

The knight asked him that with a well voiced tone while doing a quick salute' at him.

"Takahisa-dono, is it ? "

Rio was asked that from inside the room.

"Yes. He said 'I want to chat with him'"

"I see"

He can't help but to remember one reason if Takahisa is calling at him with such timing.

But regarding how far Takahisa understands the situation, it might be around the same level as Satsuki.

That kind of question is surfacing in Rio's head but,

# Part 4

"Certainly. Please guide me there"

Nodding, Rio decided to come to where Takahisa is.



Rio has come all the way till in front of the room in which Takahisa is lodging in while taking along one of the court ladies and leaving the other one in his room.

There's two girls who wore knight attire standing in front of the door of his room.

Their age is maybe around Rio age.

One of them have petite height, while the other one is slightly higher than the average woman.

The petite girl is looking at Rio and then,

"AAH, YOU'RE THE STRONG PERSON FROM LAST NIGHT ! "

Said those words with a slightly idiotic-like tone.

"Oy, Alice ! "

"S-Sowyy. Kiara-senpai"

The petite girl called Alice is promptly apologizing when she's being scolded.

The girl called Kiara was glaring at Alice while a sweet smile is forming on her lips.

It's meaning is "The one to whom you should apologizing to isn't me right ? ".

"M-My deepest apologies ! "

Alice is bowing repeatedly to Rio.

"My colleague showing such discourtesy. My deepest apology for such action"

Kiara also apologizing after Alice.

"It's nothing since I don't really mind about it"

Rio's shaking his head in denial without showing an expression of particularly minding about such things.

"You're Haruto-sama right. Takahisa-sama and your highness princess Lilyana have been waiting for you. Please wait a minute"

After saying so, Kiara knocked on the door.

(Your highness princess Lilyana is also in there ? )

Rio just slightly confused since there's an unexpected person involved.

"Haruto-sama has arrived"

"Please enter"

The voice of a man is resounding from inside the room.

"Permission has been granted. Please follow the way"

Kiara pressed him to enter the room after opening the door.

"Well then, I'll be waiting in there"

## Part 5

The court lady who followed Rio said those words.

As expected, it seems he can't be careless since it goes as far as there's royalty of a foreign country in the room.

"Certainly. Well then, I'll see you later"

Rio's turning around and then went toward the room where Takahisa's waiting.

"Excuse me"

Saying so, Rio enters the room.

The room is made like design of the room of classic hotels, the inside isn't that much different with the room where Rio's staying at.

But, he can feel that Takahisa room is more spacious.

From the fact that there's severals beds inside, it might be a room made for the stay of a large number of people.

Wooden table was extabilished in the middle of the room.

In that place, Takahisa was sitting along with Lilyana.

The girl who wore knight attire and a girl who was seemingly a maid who wore an apron dress is right by their side.

"I'm happy that you came. Thank you very much"

Takahisa who sat on the chair is standing up immediately.

Lilyana following so while smiling a sweet smile toward Rio.

"It's nothing, I got too much free time than what I expect"

Rio's replying with a similiarly bright smile.

But, he still held suspicion inside,

(What the hell are they going to do ? )

He thinks about such things while squinting his eyes.

There's four people waiting inside the room, including Takahisa.

He didn't see Satsuki's figure.

If it's for the talk regarding the matter of Miharuru and co, he can't understand the reason for the addition of three people aside from Takahisa.

"Please take your seat"

Takahisa recommended the seat in front of him.

Though he's slightly perplexed by this kind of situation,

"Excuse me"

Rio decided to play along as he nodded lightly.

Kiara's pulls Rio chair.

"Thank you very much"

Rio's telling his gratitude to Kiara and then sat on his chair.

Kiara left the room after bowing once to them.

When everyone is already sitting on their chair, the maid is starting the preparation to make tea.

"Thank you very much for your help last night, Haruto-sama. I'm safe thanks to your action"

Lilyana told her gratitude while showing a pure and innocent smile.



## Part 6

"Please let me say my gratitude too. Thank you for protecting Lily"

Takahisa also bowed his head deeply as he said his gratitude.

He can feel their sincere gratitude.

"It's nothing, I just repulsed the burglars who were coming at me. The matter which ended without any danger approaching your highness Lilyana is thanks to the knights of this country and your own attendant"

Rio's slightly shaking his head in denial.

He's wondering whether he's being summoned for them to say their gratitude for the matter last night.

In that case he can understand the reason why Lilyana and the others are also sitting along in this room.

"No, I might have been attacked if Haruto-sama was not there. That's why, please be proud of what you did"

Lilyana's saying that while showing a carefree smile at him.

"Your words are more than what I deserve"

Rio told her that with a strained smile on his face.

"You're such a modest person aren't you"

"No, that's just how I am"

Rio's shaking his head slowly.

"Senpai will..... Satsuki-san will be here soon. We'll have a conversation after that"

Right after Takahisa said those words, the sound of the door being knocked is resounding inside of the room.

"I've brought Satsuki-sama"

"It seems she has already arrived. Please enter"

After Takahisa said so, the maid opened the door immediately.

Thereupon, Satsuki made her appearance.

Satsuki's slightly perplexed at the sight of the three people who were sitting inside of the room.

"..... Hello. and good evening"

She's staring in amazement as she entered the room while nodding lightly at them.

Lilyana replied to that with a blooming smile.

"Good evening. Sorry for the sudden call, senpai. Please sit on your chair"

Takahisa's offering a seat to Satsuki.

"Thank you. Excuse me then"

As she nodded, Satsuki timidly sat on the vacant seat next to Rio.

Kiara's coming along to help her by pulling the chair for her and then left the room again.

"Fril, please leave the room along with Hilda when you done with making the tea. Takahisa-sama wants to have an important conversation with the two of them"

## Part 7

And so, Lilyana gave an order to clear the room.

"Certainly. Your highness"

The girl called Fril gave a solemn reply.

Though the female knight called Hilda seems slightly dissatisfied, she just silently standing on the back without voicing any objection.

When she finished making the tea one minute later, Fril and Hilda left the room while leaving just the four of Lilyana, Takahisa, Satsuki and Rio.

Silence descended in the room for few seconds.

A while later.

"I don't call anyone but the two of you. Uhm..... It's about the three people from now on"

Takahisa was breaking the ice by telling them those with apologetic expression.

"Three people from now on ? "

Satsuki recited his words with puzzled expression.

"..... It's the three who's under him, Haruto-san's, protection"

So that there's no room for misunderstanding, Takahisa declared that while looking at Rio.

"W-Wait a minute. .... You told that matter ? To the princess"

Satsuki's reacting as if being confused.

Lilyana was someone who belongs to the royalty of Saint Stellar kingdom.

In short, when that matter known by her, it held the meaning that it's also known by Saint Stellar kingdom which is standing behind her.

When Rio and Satsuki's exchanging line of sight, Lilyana's showing a slightly troubled smile.

When Lilyana was about to say something at that time,

"My apologies"

Takahisa's bowing his head to apologize to them till his head almost touched the desk.

"Though I felt worried when I heard about it from senpai. I also didn't wish to treat them like bargaining chips of politics"

Takahisa telling him that with a tone as if crushed by guilt.

"In that case..... Why ? In the case of telling that to the princess, you should at least consult about it beforehand and yet....."

Satsuki muttering those words with slightly grimacing face.

"My deepest apologies. I'm asked for unreasonable things. I'm really anxious when looking at Takahisa-sama who became exhausted after the evening party"

Lilyana replied with a apologetic voice instead of Takahisa.

"You're not the wrong one, Lily ! It's mine ! "

Takahisa's covering for Lilyana while standing as if his hand hitting on the desk.

When the atmosphere of the place become slightly heated up,

"Please calm down"

## Part 8

Rio calmly said that.

The line of sight of the three people inside the room is gathering to Rio.

"It can't be helped that you're telling her about it. But, why did you tell her about that and, what do you want to do, won't you let me to hear your explanation about the reason in order, Takahisa-dono ? "

Rio's saying that while his line of sight is staying unmoving from Lilyana.

"Your highness princess Lilyana. What was the reason that you think why Takahisa-dono suddenly became exhausted after the evening party has ended ? "

After he heard Lilyana's story, he thinks that maybe the reason for Takahisa exhaustion is related to him telling Lilyana about Miharu and co.

Rio wanted to know about that.

"That is....."

Takahisa is at a loss of words while showing the expression as if he's swallowing a bitter bug.

"I could say that it can't be helped that he's being worried. When he just arrived in this world, Takahisa-sama is in a extremely depressed mood as he's extremely worried about the safety of his friends and family. They're the most important people to him in his world. After that, he's fallen into despair when he found out the fact that there's no way to go back to his world. His mood became extremely bright lately when he heard that they also came to this world"

Lilyana's telling about Takahisa's situation since she's unable to just watch him in that kind of dilemma.

"In the first place, we're attending this evening party because Takahisa-sama gained the information about his friend, Satsuki-sama, who became the hero of Galwark kingdom. He's then moving separately with Satsuki-sama, after the

attack of the burglars, Takahisa-sama's complexion suddenly paled, so I asked whether he actually got the information about his acquaintances"

"..... I see"

Rio's nodding as if giving his consent.

The story is more or less following the logic, there wasn't any place where he can't understand.

The heartfelt pain when ones being separated from their beloved people such as family, lover, or friends is something that he can easily understand.

When Haruto's parents divorced, when his beloved childhood friend suddenly disappeared, when Rio's mother was murdered, when he was reincarnated in this world and then regained his memory——.

Because both Haruto and Rio already tasted that kind of feeling for at least four times.

Their individual personalities does exist, since the pained feeling as if his own heart was being plucked out from its place isn't something that can be so easily restored back.

That pain will become even more painful for the one the more important the other party is to them.

"In short Takahisa-dono used to think that Miharu-san and the others are on earth. But, he thought that maybe Miharu-san and the others are actually came to this world too from the latest information that he got from Satsuki-sama. And then, he told your highness princess Lilyana about that fact"

Naturally his mental state will be unstable and he'll feel anxious when he knows that the people who's coming along with him suddenly disappeared and he just came alone in another world.

Because Satsuki was also like that.

Surely there will be strong lingering attachment to the real world.

And then, Rio thought that strong attachment might be the existance of Miharu and the others.

## Part 9

".....Yes. That's right. Since she said that she'll give her cooperation to me....."

Takahisa replied with a expression of a mix between agony and confusion.

It's been more than three month since Takahisa and Satsuki came to this world.

They might have recovered from the mental damage bit-by-bit during those times.

But, when he received the information that Satsuki was also summoned in the neighbouring country and when he heard the information regarding Miharu and the others from Satsuki.

It definitely caused a great tremor in his mind.

(Well, I've expected that he'll be shaken by that news)

That's right, though the degree is different, he already expected beforehand that Takahisa will be receiving a great shock when he knows the information about Miharu and the others.

If there's the point which is beyond his assumption, it was the fact that Takahisa received an even greater shock than what he expected.

He couldn't even hide his excitement just by getting the information about Miharu and even giving a cue for Lilyana to notice his abnormal mood.

He can't hide that secret when being asked by her, and in the end told her about it.

Those situation might be brought about due to Takahisa's weakness.

Or, Takahisa might be able to show those weaknesses since he trusts Lilyana.

But, Takahisa is still a freshmen of highschool.

While being naturally clever for a mere 15 or 16 years old boy, that feeling might be too much for him to be able to hold it back.

(Was I too optimistic about him. His own safety doesn't always mean safe for the other people. .... No, seeing that princess Lilyana is always by his side, it's only a matter of time till he'll tell her about it)

Rio's sighing lightly to that conclusion.

Despite looking at the tea utensil that was placed on top of the desk while pondering about those matters, he suddenly feels someone line of sight from his side.

For some reason, Satsuki's sending a pleading glance toward Rio.

This result might be okay.

Rio's sending a gentle smile as he noticed that and then,

"May I hear what do you want to do, Takahisa-dono ? "

So he asked.

It can't be helped when he sees that Takahisa is also aware of his own fault.

Rio decided to confirm Takahisa's intention for now for the sake of meaningful conversation.

"..... I want to protect those three. I want to protect everyone with my own hand. So that..... I won't feel a regret....."

Takahisa said that while tightly grasping his fist.

This answer is pretty much still within his calculation.

"I see. Well then, if, for example, those three's feeling anxious with daily live in the castle, if their reply is "I'm scared", what are you going to do ? "

Rio's tone when he asked that question is completely indifferent.

Takahisa's slightly startled.

"That will never happen. I definitely will persuade them"



## Part 10

Takahisa's tone regained a bit of its strength.

Aki and Masato are his own sibling.

There's no reason for a stranger to complain about that.

"Can you really persuade them that their life in the castle will be completely safe ? "

"It'll be alright if it's Lily ! I can trust her. Though she's a royalty, she's someone who can understand me. She said that she'll give her cooperation so that those three won't become a political tool"

"Is there any basis in which you can guarantee those words ? "

"She's a royalty. I'm also a hero. If we're cooperating, there won't be any domestic noble who can interfere ! "

Takahisa's words of objection become passionate bit by bit after being shaken by Rio's words.

Though he's very confident with his answer, it's lacking credibility.

"It seems that you, for one or another reason, is really trusting your highness princess Lilyana, aren't you. But, me and Satsuki-sama almost know nothing about your highness. Including what kind of standing that both of you have in Saint Stellar kingdom"

In short, that's Rio indirect expression of saying "I can't trust you".

He didn't say it straight out though since it might become lese majeste toward Lilyana if he spoke it frankly.

"..... That is....."

Somehow Takahisa is at a loss for words as he guessed the meaning behind Rio's words.

But, when he's showing an expression as if he ate a bitter bug,

"As long as we can meet..... Everyone will understand as long as I tell them"

Soon, Takahisa said that while looking fixedly at Rio.

Rio's sighing lightly and,

"What do you think we should do, Satsuki-sama ? "

Then asked Satsuki who sat beside him with a pensive look on her face.

"The die has been cast seeing that it is already known by the princess. He is already showing his determination too. In that case, I think what was left is..... Depending on the decision of Miharu-chan and the others"

Maybe because of a light headache, Satsuki's replying while pressing her left hand on her forehead.

Having met with Takahisa, the older brother of Aki and Masato, she might have no authority upon them who's not even her blood relative.

So Satsuki gave that answer after such trouble.

"The problem is what kind of method we have to use to set the meeting"

Rio said that while shrugging his shoulder.

""What kind" you sa~..... Ah that's right, that's also the problem right "

Though Satsuki almost saying "The same one that you're using last night" by reflex, she shut her lips before it cause any further trouble.

As expected, she couldn't just say that she slipped out of the castle last night in front of Lilyana.

There's no way they'll slip out of the castle by taking along the royalty of another country.

Moreover, the defense of the castle tonight is even more strict to the point of it can't be compared from before.

They'll increase the amount of light, and increasing their vigilance on the sky.

Even if they're receiving the help from Rio, only now she'll be opposing even if it's a secret meeting.

## Part 11

"When will the two of you returning to your country ? "

Rio asked that question to Lilyana and Takahisa.

"Though regretful, unfortunately we can't stay for too long. Though we can prolonging our stay if there's a valid reason to it, we're going to return to our country when the evening party has ended"

Lilyana's replying to him.

"I see. In that case, it'll be difficult for us to meet again right"

Rio sighed lightly as he said those words.

"Uhm, where's everyone right now ? "

Takahisa suddenly asking to him.

"They're currently lodging in a certain inn in this capital"

"Inn you say..... Is it really safe ? "

Wrinkles appearing on Takahisa forehead.

"Their inn is a high class one where wealthy people staying in. There's soldiers stationed in its vicinity and the soldiers are always patrolling around its vicinity. No idiot will cause any kind of problem in this kind of place"

Rio replied with a cool tone.

(Moreover, a powerful bodyguard is also going along with them.....)

He recalling a strong sense of security thinking about Celia and Aisia who's accompanying Miharuru and the others.

But, he wants to hide the information about Celia and Aisia for now.

Since Celia's currently traveling incognito.

"If that's the case, how about you call them to come to the castle ? "

Lilyana suddenly proposed that.

Rio and Satsuki's eyes is opened wide in amazement.

"To the castle..... Is it"

Rio's showed a bitter expression.

If they ended up being summoned to the castle, its the same meaning as an open declaration that Miharu and the others have some relationship with the hero.

But, seeing that clandestine meeting is being sealed, it's also true that they've no other way for Miharu and the others to meet Takahisa except going from the front door.

There might be room for consideration if Miharu and the other is wishing for it.

Though he is personally opposing to that idea, he abandoned such idea.

"We just got attacked by the burglar awhile ago you know ? There's a possibilities of a second attempt but....."

## Part 12

Satsuki's mentioning that despite being anxious herself.

"There's no way the burglars will try to do the same thing again tonight"

Lilyana replied that with a plain tone.

"Why do you think so ? "

Satsuki's asking that question to her.

"Assembling the master of that field, polishing the plan, poking into the gap of defense and yet they still failed. The people who can perform such task without leaving conspicuous trace. At least they won't even think about performing a second attack so soon right. Galwark kingdom is also increasing their vigilance"

Lilyana stated her own idea.

Rio also have the same idea as her.

Commencing a raid when the other party is being vigilant is just a plain poor tactic.

Because surprise attack become a surprise attack due to the opponent carelessness.

In the first place he doesn't think that they'll be preparing substitute members for a second attempt to such a important plan in which they must infiltrate the castle to kill the royalties.

"I see. That's true....."

Satsuki nodded in agreement.

"But, the mastermind is currently still hiding inside the castle, so the danger has yet to pass. Was what you think around this point right ? "

Rio's asking Lilyana.

"I can understand your worry. First, let me to say, I, the first princess of Saint Stellar kingdom, Lilyana, swear upon my own name that I'll protect those three"

Lilyana replied to him with a serious expression on her face.

"Then may I hear in detail about how far that protection will be ? "

"We only brought along the people that we can put a full trust on that person from our country. There's also several excellent guard knights amongst them. But, if we brought them inside the room, we can greatly decrease the chance of outsider participating in it"

From the fact that Takahisa and Lilyana is using their own way of being vigilant which is different from the Galwark kingdom when staying inside this room, it certainly will guarantee that there won't be any outside in this place.

You might say that they need to take several safety measures since the betrayer is still in the castle.

When Rio's frowning as if hesitating,

"..... I personally didn't mind about it. But, I think that we might need to make a confirmation from Miharu-san and the others whether they want to come to the castle or not"

So she said.

"I see. How about you, Satsuki-sama"

"I..... Also don't mind for it"

"That was what you think right ? "

## Part 13

Lilyana asked that question.

"It makes me feel anxious if they're then being forced to live in a strange castle. In addition, there'll be interference from outside too. Since you need to report to the lord of the castle, the king, in case you want to bring them in"

Satsuki's replying.

But, maybe because that objection was expected.

"It's as you say, we can't avoid to make a report to your majesty seeing that we're the ones who's being invited. Moreover, if your majesty says that they want to meet those three, there's no mean for me, who's just a mere princess, to stop him. But, it's the same case if that request is coming from our side. Because there'll be bodyguards attached if we, a foreign guest or Satsuki-sama, the hero of this country is strolling outside. Seeing that we can't even doing a secret meeting in this current situation, we can't avoid to explain the circumstances to your majesty"

Lilyana replied almost without pausing.

They can't make a simple reason such as the hero is strolling together.

It seems they have no choice but have to be frank about Miharu and co if they want to do this. そ

In case the information about Miharu and the others are known to the public, they might have to reconsider which safer between outsider and insider nobilities and royalties. [TL : 美春達の情報を国に公開した場合、王城の内部と外部のどちらで面談を行うのが安全かといえば内部だろう]

"That's right but....."

As for Satsuki, to somehow not disclose that information to the country, she has no feasible method to meet without being found out.

Which means that they're at their wit's end since Takahisa will be back to Saint Stellar country right after the end of the evening party.

They're pressed in times and don't have that much freedom to make their move.

"May I ask Haruto-sama whether the sibling[Little brother and little sister] of Takahisa-sama is amongst the 3 that under your protection. Will you kindly give a favor to Takahisa-sama who want to meet with his family? "

Lilyana made a sincere plea.

"That's just natural. Because we're being worried about their safety"

Satsuki also replying immediately, Rio also nodding by her side.

"I agree with your opinion to inviting them to the royal castle. But, in return I want you to make a vow, how about it? For example, even if they're wishing to go along with Takahisa-kun, I want you to make sure that they won't become political tools against their own will"

Satsuki said that with a sullen face.

"It's the same with me. I want you to respect their own will no matter what they're going to choose. That's the condition for inviting Miharu-san and the others to royal castle"

Rio also presented his condition.

Though it's an extremely disrespected act for doing something like forcing an agreement toward the royalties, nevertheless, Rio have no choice but to say it.

The current Rio have no strong relationship with Miharu and the others, though it's clearly not his place to butt in their matter, nevertheless—



## Part 14

"I give my vow. I'm vowing to it. I want to meet and talk to them. I won't let them to get themselves being dragged into political strife"

Though Takahisa made an expression as if unable to hold back any longer, he gave his vow just in the nick of time.

"I also give my vow. Because I just follow Takahisa-sama's will"

Lilyana also saying that with a calm tone while placing her hand on her chest.

Rio's staring into their eyes.

"..... Understood. I'll confirm their will till tomorrow whether they want to come to the royal castle. Since I'll have an audience with your majesty the king from afternoon, I'll finish it within this morning and then report back to this room"

Rio's scheduled to have an audience with king Francois Galwark tomorrow afternoon regarding his achievement in the suppression of the burglars.

Perhaps he'll be given the permit to travel alone or along with someone if it's just in the morning.

If it's Rio, he'll be easily given more freedom to move around than the royalties or hero.

And then he'll be contacting Aisia as they're getting closer to the inn by saying something like that there's his acquaintances in there.

"Thank you very much"

Takahisa and Lilyana's telling their gratitude.

They're showing such delighted expression while emotion and Reason inside Rio's fighting at each other.

Rio's heart is filled with mixed feelings.

# Chapter 102: Choice

## Part 1

Morning of the day when the final evening party will be held.

The weather on the outskirts of royal capital is sunny.

Though Rio was easily permitted to come out in the face of meeting an acquaintance, they assigned one free knight as his convoy.

Rio's strolling in the downtown of royal capital along with his knight guard under the bright sunlight of spring season raining down incessantly.

The knight guard isn't really a stranger for Rio, it was the young man who was trying to protect Flora with his own body during the burglar attack of the last night.

His name is Kyle.

(Well then, Aisia. We'll commence our plan now)

Rio's sending a sidelong glance at Kyle who's walking on his right while communicating with Aisia who's in separated place using telepathy.

— Understood. I and Celia will come to your location immediately. Then we chat with each other even while moving around.

Rio's calling and then Aisia immediately answering his call.

He can perform a telepathic communication with Aisia as he's getting closer to a feasible distance, it's also easier to make Aisia explain the situation to Miharu and the others.

Regarding the fact that Takahisa really wants to meet them.

For the sake of meeting Takahisa immediately, Miharu and the others must go to the royal castle.

There's also the matter that they will draw attention from the nobilities and the royalties if they were to appear in the castle.

The matter that they will try to use the political value of Miharu and the others might be approaching them.

The matter that they don't know when Takahisa, Satsuki and the three others can meet like this coming for the second time.

The matter of respecting the will of Miharu and the others which ever side they'll choose whether it's Satsuki or Takahisa after the reunion.

And then——

And then, the matter of, in case they feel anxious and the reunion is just for the sake of meeting with Satsuki and Takahisa, he doesn't mind letting them stay with him for a bit longer.

He already conveyed all that he should convey to them.

Despite not having that much time, from the fact that they're given some time to think about it even if just a little is the reason why he let Miharu and the others stay in the inn as now.

But, seeing that he's using the pretext of meeting his acquaintance for his stroll, it's not like he can just stroll around without meeting anyone.

So it's been decided that Rio will do a camouflage meeting with Celia while Miharu and the others are having a discussion.

As long as Aisia, who can grasp Rio position and communicating with him was there, it's piece of cake for them to set an unexpected encounter in the city.

(Ah, I found you)

Rio told Aisia that he found the two of them from quite a distant.

In contrast to Aisia who hide her face with a cape that was attached to her white colored one piece, Celia's wearing pink tunic dress with lace on it.

Different from the usual, Celia's changed her white colored hair to gold with a magic tool.

Coupled with her ever youthful appearance, she gave the feeling of a pretty noble daughter around the half of her teens.

——Well then, I'll go back to Miharu and the others' place.

When Rio found Celia, Aisia telepathic communication's reverbrating in his head.

Aisia who's in front of his line of sight is turning around and then walking back to the inn.

## Part 2

(Thank you)

Rio's saying his gratitude and then ended their telepathic communication.

It seems that somehow Rio's figure also entered Celia sight as she's approaching to his direction with cheerful expression after staring for a while.

"Isn't it Haruto. It's been a while, right ! Since when did you came to the royal capital ? "

Celia's address Rio just like a friend who hasn't meet for a while.

"It's been a while. Cecilia. I came to royal capital just few days ago"

"Is that so ? In that case you should come to visit soon right"

Celia's puffed her cheeks cutely as if it was natural.

It's a superb acting skill to the point that one can't think it's just improptu action.

Nonetheless, her anger can certainly be felt but, for some reason it doesn't have that much impact.

For some reason, Kyle who's on his side is entering a light trance state because of Celia's lovely gesture.

"I have many errand to do. But, I'm glad that we didn't miss each other. Since I was just about to go to meet you after this. Are you just about to leave ? "

"Uhuhn, I'm fine if it's right now but, can we talk for a while ? "

Celia's making a suggestion following their original plan.

"Yeah, I can. Please wait a minute"

Saying so, Rio was looking at Kyle by his side.

"Kyle-dono, she's my acquaintance. Can we go to some store to have a chat ? "

"Y-Yes, acknowledged. I'll be on stand-by on it's vicinities ! "

Kyle's making a fist with his right hand in panic and then said those words while hitting his fist to his chest.

This is the typical salute for the countries around this area.

"Thank you very much. Well, shall we go then, Cecilia"

"Yeah. But, are you fine with leaving your companion ? "

"It's alright. He's my guard. I've said it right. That I was just about to go to meet you"

"Is it ? Well, fine by me if it's alright but, please let me hear your story"

After that, Rio and Celia's entered a fairly good coffee shop.

The two of them are sitting in front of each other at the terrace seat with unobstructed view while the tumult outside become the bgm.

Kyle wasn't coming with them and is just looking at them from outside of the store.

As expected, there is no way he can hear the subject of their conversation.

"Sorry for calling so suddenly. The situation become slightly complicated"

After ordering and it just became the two of them, Rio was apologizing to Celia.

"Uhuhm, it's okay. But, say, I never expected that you'll come along with a knight"

"The truth is, it's because I'm currently lodging in the royal castle as one of their guest, and he's one of the guards in there"

Rio's smiling wryly as he briefly explaining the situation to Celia.

"Guest of the castle ? Not guest of duke Kretia house ? "

"Yes. I've been ordered to lodging in the royal castle since last night. Well, I'll explain the situation later"

## Part 3

He didn't want to make her feeling worried by saying that there was burglar attack.

As he thought so, Rio decided to change the subject of conversation.

"Is it ? It's okay if there's no problem but..... Is it the matter about Miharuru and the others first"

"Yes. As what I told Aisia before, I found the person who Miharuru-san and the others were looking for. I've asked Satsuki-san's help to explain the situation to him but, a slightly irregular situation has occurred"

Rio's saying so while showing a troubled expression.

"So you mean it's for the sake of meeting with him right away without the country being aware about the existence of Miharuru and the others ? "

So Celia's asking him after summarizing the situation.

"Yes. Different from Satsuki-san single room, there's people and her highness princess attaching right on to Takahisa-san side almost 24/7. Thought there's another trouble of my freedom of movement being extremely restricted while staying in the castle"

Rio replied while sighing.

"I see"

Celia's nodded as if understanding his situation[i].

"But, more than anything else and which is the biggest problem, is the fact that the existence of Miharuru and the others are known by the first princess of Saint Stellar kingdom. Fortunately they're not telling a soul about this fact"

Celia's staring dumbfoundedly when Rio's telling her that.

"Good grief, it's known by the royalties ? That's huge trouble right. Can we trust her ? "

"..... More or less. But I won't give complete trust on her though"

Rio's answering Celia's question after brief pause.

Both Takahisa and Lilyana vowed to Rio and Satsuki last night.

In case that if after this Takahisa's the one who's protecting Miharuru and the others, he'll do his best to not let them become a political tool and respecting their will.

But, to be honest, besides Takahisa being the blood relative of Aki and Masato, Rio couldn't place his trust to Lilyana.

It'll be better if it's the king who's the top of the country, but she a mere princess, she can't always go against her political obligation.

Nevertheless, they won't be treated badly seeing that Lilyana is the royalty of a big country.

Though he needs written vow with similar content from Saint Stellar who's standing behind her for minimum trust to Lilyana, implementing that is impossible at the present stage.

Though it's an action that just barely being rude to them, it's there so that she'll put a great effort in fulfilling her duty as a common ground.

"Nevertheless, Takahisa-san is the elder brother for Masato and Aki-chan. When they want to meet their family, I don't think that an outsider can butt in more than necessary"

Just because Rio's protecting Aki and Masato, it doesn't mean that they're his slaves.

Above all, Takahisa is in the position in which he can claim the right for the protection of Aki and Masato as their older brother.

It's whether or not he should set a reunion between siblings who have become separated.



## Part 4

"Let them know everything, and they still have the responsibility and right to make their own choice"

Rio said that with a firm tone.

Even if it'll create a danger after the reunion, nevertheless, family does have strong will to meet again——.

Whether this choice is right or wrong, that's not a problem that should be given to the person who's not even their blood relative.

Was what Rio felt.

"I decided to respect and trust them including Miharu-san to decide whether they want to meet Takahisa-san while knowing the risk"

"It's a fine argument..... Was what I thought but, are you really fine with it ? "

Celia asked Rio while looking at his eyes as if peering into his heart.

"..... That's not the problem that should be decided by me"

Rio said that while showing slightly lonely smile.

Celia's sighing lightly after hearing his reply.

"..... It has been in my mind since long time ago but, you're extremely realistic regarding human relationship, how should I say, it's really dry, right"

Soon after that, Celia began to tell him about that.

Rio's showed a puzzled expression.

"You..... Should..... Start depending on your surroundings even more like this. That is, Uhm——"

"Sorry for the waiting ! Here's your order"

When Celia was about to say something, the female employee was sociably carrying their order.

"Here you go ! "

With a splendid business smile, she's pouring the tea from the teapot to the porcelain-made teacup.

Thanks to that, the flow of the conversation is completely interrupted.

"Thanks"

Rio's telling his gratitude while smiling wryly.

Celia was staring at the female employee who was interrupting their conversation at the most important point.

But, she immediately removed her line of sight from the female employee, maybe she knew right away that it's just an unjustified resentment.

A subtle silent is flowing by for few second between them.

"..... Shall we eat ? "

"..... Uhn"

Rio's suggesting to her and thus they tasted the warm tea.

And then, after appeasing their thirst,

"Anyhow. Miharu and the others also worried when I left the inn you know"

After some time hs passed, Celia said that.

## Part 5

"..... I see"

Rio cheeks is dropping down wearily.

"If Miharuru and the others are decided to go to the royal castle, let me to ask you about what are you going to do in that case ? "

"I've made a plan to attend the evening party once I go back to the royal castle. Later, I'll come and greet Miharuru-san and the others along with the people of the country"

"Roger. Is there something that I can do ? "

"No, it's okay. Since currently there's many people of Bertram kingdom in Galwark kingdom's castle, please wait in the inn along with Aisia for the time being"

Rio's replying while shaking his head in denial.

As expected, he can't take Celia along with him to the royal castle of Galwark kingdom.

Because many nobles of Bertram kingdom are currently in that castle.

Celia eyes opened wide just for a moment and,

"I see. The people of Bertram kingdom are there huh....."

She's muttered those words with slightly gloomy face.

Rio cleverly guessed the change in her expression.

"My former classmates are also amongst them"

When Rio suddenly told her that Celia was startled.

"Are you alright ? There wasn't anyone who noticed you isn't it ? "

"Yes. I never divulge my lineage you know. But, I was scared when princess Flora asked whether we met somewhere before though"

Rio lips when he said so warped in delicate way as if smiling wryly.

"I see, princess Flora huh..... Though it might be unexpected, your highness is someone who have keen eyes in seeing the true essence of someone. Maybe she doesn't feel any kind of discomfort in your atmosphere"

"I see, what should I do then ? It's a bit hard for me to imagine it though....."

Rio impression toward Flora is of a quiet and reserved girl.

She's low key which made one not think that she's a royalty.

Always peeking at the expression of someone with cowering face.

Maybe Celia meant the observing eyes she has.

"I think I understand her a bit. She also has sharp intuition"

"Right ? "

Celia said that with slightly proud expression.

"Isn't Cecilia also caring about your students"

"EH? U~hn, well I can see it like that since I have long years of experience as a teacher. I've been in contact with the students little by little over the long years..... you see"

Celia's showing a light smile and a slightly embarrassed face.

But, that smile felt slightly distant.

"So you're worried ? About Bertram kingdom"

## Part 6

Rio asked while peeking into Celia eyes.

Celia showed a slightly bewildered expression but,

"Well..... It's not like that, you know"

Her reply was a cold one.

Rio's sighing lightly to Celia's reply.

"The nobilities of Bertram kingdom who were in the royal castle established an anti-government organization called Restoration and are supporting princess Flora. Though it seems that Hiroaki Sakata-sama is also dancing on the palm of duke Gustave Euguno, right"

Rio suddenly started to tell her about the current situation of Bertram kingdom.

"..... He~, so that's the case ? "

Contrary to her words, Celia was seemingly attracted to that topic.

As expected, the situation of her motherland's surely weighted in her mind.

"In addition, in the evening party the day before yesterday, Galwark kingdom announced their support to Restoration. Though the two countries of Bertram kingdom and Galwark kingdom still maintain their alliance normally after the coup d'etat, the alliance between the two countries breaking off is just matter of times, right"

Seeing that the Galwark kingdom are supporting the formality of Restoration, the Bertram kingdom anti-government organization, the relationship between the two country already impossible thing both in name and reality.

Though Bertram kingdom seems so quite recently, there's no way of avoiding the fire when they know that their neighbour have been housing the anti-government organization.

"Y-Yeah....."

Celia's gulping due to the gloomy situation which has enveloped her motherland.

"The Bertram kingdom itself doesn't show any movement that stands out so far, right. Because the size of their national power is halved due to the civil war, it should be natural that they want to avoid a war, right"

"Well..... The Bertram kingdom definitely doesn't want to stage a war against Galwark kingdom in their current situation. There's also the Proxia empire in the north. I also don't know how that country will move in this kind of situation"

Celia's telling that while creasing her eyebrows.

"That's right. And as a means to check them, Galwark kingdom made a grand announcement about Satsuki-san as a hero in the evening party....."

Rio's words are unnaturally stopping in the middle of his sentence.

The matter of the raid last night suddenly crossed in his head.

When seeing from the current trend of the world, since it's an action which seems like a provocation toward Galwark kingdom when it's done with this kind of timing, the mastermind might be anyone of Bertram kingdom or Proxia kingdom.

The spies of both countries might have infiltrated into Galwark kingdom, or it might be someone backed by one of the two countries which being invited in the evening party.

Rio's stopping his train of thought after thinking that far.

Since whichever it is has nothing to do with him.

## Part 7

"I expect that maybe it'll turn into a cold war with the three sides restraining each other. Though there's a rumor saying that the shadow of Proxia empire's lurking behind that coup d'état sometimes ago, Bertram kingdom itself also so calm with those rumors so it doesn't seem that they've allegiance with Proxia empire"

"..... That's right. Now that I heard the gist of the situation from Rio, I also think so"

Celia's consenting with slightly troubled face.

"If I remember it correctly, the territories of earl Claire is at the eastern part of Bertram kingdom right. There's also the territory of marquiss Rodan, the headquarters of Restoration in its vicinities. So it's a good thing to prepare for your homecoming based on that"

Rio's telling her that with troubled smile.

"..... That means....."

Celia's bewildered by Rio line of sight.

"I've said before that it's my turn to save you right? I want Cecilia to become happy. That's why please feel free to say it if there's a place that'll make you happy. I won't spare any effort to help you" [TL: Marry her then]

Rio's telling her that with slightly embarrassed face.

That is, in short——

Celia's staring in amazement as she's vaguely guessing what Rio wants to say.

"Let's go to the territory of earl Claire once this matter is finished. Since we'll depart in few days, please wait with Aisia for the time being"

Rio said that with kind tone.

"..... Yes. Thank you....."

Though she want to cry somehow, Celia bit her lips tightly.

She's not regretting the fact that she's escaping from her threat-like political marriage.

But, even though the country is splitting into two due to the civil war, despite the nobilities accomplishing their duties in that country, can she really just spend her time leisurely by herself.

Celia always had that kind of doubt this entire time.

Though she has been trying to hide it in herself, everything might be seen through by Rio.

Moreover, she noticed that currently Rio's there to support her decision.

As if saying, please choose the path that you won't regret.

She was presented with a choice.

She was in a completely same situation as Miharuru and the others.

Celia's embracing the feeling that is hard to describe.

At that time,

——Haruto, Miharuru and the others decided to meet Takahisa.

Aisia's voice was resounding in Rio's head.

Rio's smiling wryly since that sensation is something that he can't just get used to no matter how many times he experiences it.

(..... Understood. I'll be separating with sensei and go back to the castle. Since I'm currently going back to the inn along with the knight from the castle, please do another things along with sensei during that time)

—— Understood.



## Part 8

After finishing his telepathic communication, a short silence descended between them.

1 second, 2 seconds.

And then,

"It seems Miharusan and the others have decided to meet Takahisa-san"

Rio said that with slightly stiff tone.

[i] [TL : she's used to be held captive inside the royal castle]

# Chapter 103: The Reunion of The Old Friend

## Part 1

Rio's going back to the royal castle and then conveyed to Lilyana and Takahisa that Miharu and the others want to meet Takahisa.

Lilyana started to move quickly after giving words of blessing to the delighted Takahisa.

Or you could say, as expected of the first princess of a big country, she already prepared ahead of time a meeting with Francois in order to enable Miharu and the others to attend the evening party in the blink of an eye.

Their audience isn't in the audience room in which can be freely heard by general public, they decided to do that in Francois' office for the sake privacy.

Rio, Satsuki, Takahisa and Lilyana, the four of them is attending the meeting to explain the situation to Francois.

The relationship between Miharu and the others with Takahisa, about Rio who became the caretaker of Miharu and the others, about them who's the acquaintance of Takahisa and Satsuki, about Miharu and the others who want to come to the castle due to that reason and then about the discussion of what they want to do from now on——.

"I understand their business. I'll invite them to the royal castle and give them the permission to stay in the guest room of princess Lilyana and Takahisa-dono"

Francois said that with a deep voice after he heard the situation.

As expected, it seems that request will go smoothly if it's asked by the two heroes of the two countries.

Takahisa's showing a relieved smile to the event that is progressing smoothly.

"But, I've got some conditions"

Francois adding to his previous words.

Though Satsuki heard his words with a calm expression, her eyebrows

twitched a bit.

"May I hear your condition ? "

Lilyana's asking without being perturbed.

"Uhm. That's right..... First is, you, you're called Haruto right"

Bowing deeply and then, Francois was looking at Rio.

"Ha. That's right"

Rio whose name is suddenly called by him is replying while still on his seat.

"You've got an upright morality since you're the one who's protecting Satsuki-dono's friends. They definitely would fetch for a great profit whether to Saint Stellar kingdom who have Takahisa-dono or our kingdom who have Satsuki-dono. Since it'll lift the load on the heart of the heroes"

Francois suddenly praised Rio.

"Am I right ? Princess Lilyana"

"Yes, it's as you say"

Lilyana's agreeing with a pure angelic smile on her face.

"Let me to say this again. What you did was for a great cause, O Haruto"

"I'm unworthy of your praise"

Though he's bad with such a hard to read kind of conversation, Rio kept his calm and replied respectfully.

"Hum, I've decided"

Francois's saying that with a daring tone.

"I've decided to tell my gratitude regarding this matter including the matter of the burglars attack during the audience in the afternoon"

## Part 2

That is in short to make the existence of Miharu and the others to be known to the public in the castle.

Takahisa was grimacing as if opposing to that decision.

He didn't think that they should come to the castle in the case they're staying for a long time.

"Your majesty, that is——"

Though Takahisa was about to send a protest to him, Francois stopped him by raising his hand just before that.

"Naturally I more than understand your worries of not wanting to expose them to public attention. But, don't you think that it's actually a poor move for trying to hide their existence? "

Francois's saying those words with a smooth and clear voice.

"With so many people moving around inside the castle..... moreover, calling over some guest to stay in the room of state guests is difficult. You should understand that right? "

"That is..... If they go in while wearing a hood....."

Takahisa said his opinion to Francois' justified reasoning.

"Naturally, though it's possible to let the people who hide their face to enter the castle as long as I gave the orders, isn't that even more conspicuous? You better not underestimate how good the ears and the eyes of the nobles are. The rumors will spread like raging flame when they noticed suspicious looking people"

"But..... Even if it can't be helped that they're noticing something suspicious, isn't it different matter with announcing their existence? There's no need for us to specially announce that. It'll be okay as long as our lips are sealed"

"That's why I say, that is where the problem is"

Francois is showing an enigmatic smile as he mentioned that point.

"In the case they're completely hidden aside, the implication of knowing a secret will give birth to discontent and distrust. If you want to get rid of unreasonable meddling, you need to release the information moderately. Humans are a living being who'll be satisfied as long as you satisfy their curiosity"

"....."

Takahisa's showing an expression of being unable to accept it yet but, he kept his silence in hearing Francois' words.

(Well, it turned out this way huh)

Though Rio was watching silently from the side, it doesn't mean that he's dissatisfied with the current situation.

It's already within his prediction if the king side will do that so that Miharu and the others can enter the castle.

The current development is still within his prediction and he didn't even want to cut in since it's still within the permissible range.

Satsuki and Lilyana are listening quietly since they must have been thinking the same thing.

But in Rio's case, he can't cut into the conversation due to the difference in their social status of him with the people in this room.

"Beside, there's also the matter of the burglar attack yesterday. Currently the atmosphere within the castle is tense. That's why I want to tell the nobilities about this happy news. Won't you give your consent in that matter? "

## Part 3

Francois's saying that matter as if to tell him to keep that matter in mind.

"You're, right. If that was the case..... But, can't we quickly call them to the audience place ? Since I don't want to take them to the place of nobilities and royalties against their own will"

"Naturally. Even I don't want to let the acquaintance of the heroes to be humiliated in public even in formal "

Francois nodded with a grim face to Takahisa's words.

"Thank you very much"

Maybe because he feels that's good enough, Takahisa finally let it go and say his gratitude.

"Yeah. Well, I think that I want them to attend tonight's evening party it's possible but, in the end the final decision is on their own person. You may discuss it with your acquaintances including what you want to do from now on "

"..... Yes, that's just natural"

Takahisa gave a firm answer with a resolute face.

(What a crafty king)

Rio's muttering that inside.

Though Francois isn't lying, it didn't feel that he said the truth either.

Francois who was experiencing the life of a human who was born and raised as much as possible as a king, against Takahisa who just entered high school and just graduated from middle school——

There's no need to say which side is more proficient in the way of speech.

Though it doesn't mean that he won't take a active role in doing something, it doesn't mean that he's going to try to do something that'll harm Miharuru and the others.

Since an action of frontal confrontation against the hero is the first thing that

he should avoid as a king, it seems that he well understands that point.

But, as long as he can take a proper conduct, if it's possible he felt as if that king is going to take the sweet things.

*"Well, with this the necessary plan for Miharu and the others to come to the castle is done".*

After they're done with fine tuning the arrangement, they just need to call Miharu and the others.

After having a discussion for a while, after the conference, Rio came to take Miharu and the others in the inn along with several knights.



The three of Miharu, Aki and Masato finally went to the castle of Galwark kingdom.

Ahead of their destination is Takahisa and Lilyana's guest room.

Waiting in that place was Takahisa, Satsuki and Lilyana.

Miharu, Aki, Masato and Satsuki—— The five of them who became separated since summoned to this world is finally reunited for the first time in this world.

"ONIICHAN ! "

Aki raised a delighted voice when she discovered Takahisa upon entering the room.

"Aki..... EVERYONE ! "

Takahisa's showing a purely delighted voice.

"ONIICHAN ! ONIICHAN ! "

## Part 4

Aki's half-running approached Takahisa.

Takahisa's spreading his arms to catch Aki.

"Aki, thank goodness..... Thank goodness ! "

Takahisa's tightly hugging Aki while saying so.

"Ahaha, it's hurts. Oniichan"

Aki said that while returning Takahisa hug herself.

"Oops, sorry"

Takahisa's loosening his hug on Aki in hurry.

But, now was Aki's turn to put more strength in embracing Takahisa.

"Nfufufu~, oniichan"

Aki said that while burying her face on Takahisa's face.

(..... She's trying to expressing it with her way huh)

The way Aki was behaving like a spoiled child to Takahisa made him happy inside.

Rio was slightly surprised since he saw the figure of Aki who's shy of strangers and a quiet girl or should he say that she's trying to act cool.

"Are you healthy, Aki ? "

"Yeah..... I'm healthy you know. How about you, oniichan ? "

Aki inside his arms is looking up at Takahisa with moist eyes.

The grief and anxiety which she felt up till now.

Was finally released from it's restrain.

"I'm also healthy. I was just worried about everyone but, I'm glad that I finally met all of you....."

He wished to meet them.



His precious people are right in front of him.

He can touch them.

He was absolutely happy just by that.

It can't be helped that Takahisa is happy with just that.

"Ehehe....."

Aki kept embracing Takahisa just like that for a while but, when she was satisfied with the skinship with her big brother a while later, she's retreated behind with slightly blushing cheeks.

"How about you, Masato ? You can come closer you know. Please show a good face"

Takahisa's looking at Masato who's standing behind Aki.

"I'm okay. It's too embarrassing, right"

Masato bluntly said that with awkward face as he just can't bear the embarrassment.

Takahisa's breaking into a kind smile to the reaction of his little brother who he saw after a long time.

## Part 5

"I'm glad. Everyone"

Miharu was smiling gently while looking at the intimacy of the three siblings.

"Ehehehe, yup ! "

Different with Aki who's showing ear to ear smile, Takahisa and Masato's exchanging glance with an embarrassed smile.

"Did you grew bigger, Masato ? You became quite splendid"

Takahisa saying that as if admiring his little brother while staring fixedly on the figure of Masato.

"Eh, is that so ? Well, maybe because it's my growth period"

Masato's replying while tilting his head as he looked at his own limbs.

"I see"

Takahisa placed his hands on Masato's shoulder while smiling at him.

And just like that he's looking at Miharu who was standing several steps away from them.

Takahisa shut his eyes and then after taking a light breath, he approached Miharu resolutely.

"..... I'm glad to meet you"

Takahisa suddenly hugged Miharu as he said so.

Thereupon, all the people who's present in that place is staring dumbfoundedly at them.

"Eh.....? "

Even Miharu received a shock by the sudden development.

Miharu's body stiffened for several seconds as she was being hugged just like that.

But, suddenly at that time.

"AH....."

Miharu's eyes opened wide.

What reflected in her eyes isn't the figure of Takahisa who's in front of her.

Who's reflected in her eyes is the figure of her childhood friend, the phantom of — — Amakawa Haruto.

He, who was grown into an adult in her recent dream was looking at her with a sad look in his eyes.

Though it was an incident that happened inside her dream, for some reason it etched deeply in Miharu's memories even now.

That nightmare is a flashback in a moment as if condensed at once.

Finally Miharu who's come to her sense is turned pale.

"Eh, YAH ! "

She pushed Takahisa by reflex.

It's a clear rejection.

Takahisa's retreating one step and then two step back while being shocked to the reaction that he can't imagine from the usually gentle Miharu.

Takahisa's blinking in shock for a while and then,

"Eh, uhm....."

# Part 6

Takahisa was looking at both of his arms in shock.

A bit of Miharu's warmth is still remaining in his arms.

Of course it's not like he hugged her with an impure thought.

He was just too excited being able to meet her again to the point that his body moved on it's own.

But, Takahisa was truly shocked when he noticed that action is disliked by Miharu.

"Ah, Uhm....."

Miharu's showing an apologetic expression on her face, maybe because she feels bad for thrusting him away.

But, Miharu's line of sight immediately loitering around Takahisa as if to escape from him.

It's scary.

For some reason she couldn't help but feel scared.

And then, her line of sight suddenly met with Rio's line of sight.

Despite it looking gloomy, the kind smile he put on his face is putting Miharu's feelings to a disordered state.

That expression is extremely similar to Haruto's expression in her dream.

"Eh..... Ah, Ha..... Ru, kun"

She could feel that the face of Haruto in her dream as if piling up with Rio face.

In the next moment, Miharu's face suddenly turned pale.

"Y-YOU'RE MISTAKEN. IT'S NOT LIKE THAT ! "

When she noticed, her heart is attacked by a freezing-like sensation and she suddenly shouted those words.

The people who was in that place staring in amazement to Miharu who's suddenly shouting like that.

"W-What's the matter ? Are you alright, Miharu-chan ? "

Satsuki's seizing both of Miharu's shoulders and called her as if trying to bring her who obviously lost her composure back.

And then, Miharu suddenly snapped back.

Her body feels like lead.

But, her head is rapidly cooling down.

What am i talking about——

Miharu's then rapidly feeling embarrassed for her own action.

"Uhm..... My apologies ! For causing such a surprise....."

Miharu's apologizing with a apologetic face.

"Really? Could it be that you feel unwell ? "

Satsuki was asking that question while staring at Miharu's face.

"N-No, I'm not"

Miharu's shaking her head in denial.

Her complexion is slightly pale.

Their line of sight met for a while.

## Part 7

"I see, well that's just natural when you're suddenly being embraced like that"

Soon after saying that, Satsuki glared at Takahisa.

"Takahisa-kun. I know that you're really happy being able to meet Miharu-chan again but, girls are delicate creatures you know. That's not how you should treat them. Since even under normal circumstances, Miharu-chan's a delicate child"

"M-My apologies. Rather could it be because it happens right after I'm embracing Aki, or maybe it's an impulsive action of mine since I'm really happy....."

Takahisa's apologizing in a panic with a pale face.

"Well, I understand your feeling though"

Satsuki's sighing with a astonished face.

"Are you alright Miharu-chan ? "

She's moving her hands to Miharu's shoulder again and then asked her for the second time.

"Yes. Uhm, I'm just really surprised..... Or should I say, my mind is suddenly in a chaotic state"

"I see....."

Satsuki's staring intently at Miharu's face.

Miharu also stared back at Satsuki.

Her previous pale complexion already gone.

It seems that she really just got slightly confused with the sudden development.

Satsuki's sighing in relief as she understood that.

"Uhm, sorry ! I'm really sorry for that ! "

Takahisa's bowing deeply to Miharuru without any unnecessary excuse.

"Y-Yeah. I'm sorry for that too. For suddenly thrusting you away with all my strength..... Aren't you hurt somewhere ? "

Miharuru's looking at the place where she pushed him as if feeling sorry for it.

"Nope, not at all. It didn't have that much power in it. Rather, it was my fault in the first place ! I'm really sorry ! "

Takahisa's apologizing while shaking his head in denial vigorously.

"Yeah. Uhm, I'm also alright....."

Smiling humbly, Miharuru was accepting Takahisa's apology.

But, for some reason, a delicate atmosphere's flowing between the two of them.

Aki was helplessly staring at their exchange.

"Nee, Oniichan. Somehow you became so bold while we were separated, haven't you. Though you couldn't even hold Miharuru-oneechan's hands before"

Aki's grinning widely as she teases him in that way.

When she said so, Takahisa's face turned bright red.

If it's said in that way won't it be known then that he liked Miharuru.

"W-WHa ! Aki ! T-That is....."

## Part 8

Though he tried to make an excuse, nothing came out of his mouth.

When he's looking at Miharuru, she was tilting her head with a puzzled face.

When their eyes meet, she's showing a forced smile.

Takahisa felt his chest tightened when he saw that kind of expression on Miharuru.

Takahisa reflexively hugging Miharuru was due to an extreme delight after being released from the despair of not being able to meet her again.

Though few years has passed by after he met her, Takahisa never had the courage to even look at her face despite loving her up till now.

Naturally, though it may be nothing more than his wishful thinking, he thinks that Miharuru isn't disliking him, he can even brag that he was the man who's closest to Miharuru.

After entering middle school, even the surrounding youth became aware of Miharuru bit by bit, he considered to confess his love so many times as he feels an unprecedented danger.

If by chance he's confessing his love, normally the answer would be an OK.

Even him have that kind of light delusion.

But, Takahisa knew.

Miharuru was always watching over Aki with a kind smile on her face since the first time he met her.

Aki also adored Miharuru like her own sister.

And then, the fact that both of them truly care about each other.

That's why he's afraid of put an end to that kind of relationship by confessing his love for Miharuru.

He and Masato was basically placing themselves amongst those two who were already like that from the very beginning, it was to keep this relationship.



And, it's because the time they spent with the four of them is truly wonderful.

He was spending everyday of his life while thinking that it's okay even if I'm not confessing my love yet and not going out with her yet.

Because he thought that kind of wonderful everyday life will keep going on like that.

But, one day, Takahisa was summoned to this world just by himself.

That time Takahisa could only despair as he was aware that the happy place was snatched away from him.

Though Takahisa who was despaired due to the unknown environment, unknown people and the unknown scenery is brought back to his feet by Lilyana.

Thanks to her he regained his footing bit by bit, even when he finally got used to this world, he often dreamed of the time when he was in the earth.

There's himself, Miharu, Aki and Masato, the four of them is laughing together.

That was a very gentle dream.

That's why Takahisa's desiring it even more.

He wanted to meet with everyone.

He wants to meet Miharu.

He won't hesitate if he can meet them again.

And this time he will not let go of them ever again.

When he's telling his intention, Lilyana gave her promise to cooperate with him.

She'll tell him no matter how trivial the information might be.

Takahisa's truly delighted and extremely grateful to Lilyana.

It came to the point that he put his trust in her.

Before he's aware of it, Lilyana also became someone as important as Miharu and the others.

On a certain day, Lilyana told him the information that she got in accordance to her promise.

It's about the debut of the hero called Sumeragi Satsuki which will be held in their neighbourhood country, Galwark kingdom.

And then, he arrived at this moment.

The future that should be lost.

When he thinks that he absolutely can't meet with Miharu and the others again, Takahisa made his resolution again.

He has no time to hesitate anymore.

The matter of him hugging Miharu is due to the strong desire which stemming from that feeling.

But, when his head cooled down and he recollected himself, suddenly hugging someone is indeed too overkill, he truly was reflecting on that.

Embarrassment and guilt is gushing forth inside of him.

But, he strangely wasn't regretting it.

Since he knows that after this he can see her without averting his gaze.

## Part 9

(It was warm.....)

It was the first time he's glued so closely to Miharu.

Her delicate body that appears to be crumbled easily just by slight push.

A tingle of the fragrance of flower is drifting from her smooth and silky black hair.

Her well ordered look was looking at him with her eyes opened wide from very close range.

Was truly precious.

He can still vividly remember this sensation with his own body.

Though it was just a moment, since he might be as well as properly savoring this sensation——

(..... What the hell am i thinking about ! )

Takahisa's reflecting on his own extremely rude line of thought.

Aki's looking up at Takahisa who's hanging his face down which already turned bright red and,

"N fufu ~"

She was smiling with an extremely delighted face.

Takahisa somehow that felt his body became limp when he saw that smile.

He'll properly apologize to Miharu again later.

Takahisa decided to do so.

Thereupon, at that time,

"My apologies for disturbing you at such a busy time"

Rio started to speak.

Everyone's attention in this room is gathered on Rio.

"Let me excuse myself since I'll have an audience with your majesty after this. I'll come again when things have settled down"

Rio said that while smiling kindly at them.

"Sorry. Since I also have to come during the audience, I'll come again later"

"I'll come too. There's also my guard knight outside. Since I take Fril as my assistant, please take your time slowly"

Satsuki and Lilyana's also going along with Rio to the audience room.

Which Takahisa, Miharuru and the others in this room.

"Well then..... See you later"

Saying so, Rio was smiling at Miharuru and the others.

Miharuru, Aki and Masato.

Though each of them were showing slightly different expressions, he can't see any kind of fear or anxiety in it.

Somehow he can also feel their relieving feeling.

When seeing their expression, he thought that it really wasn't a mistake to let them meet like this.

Rio and Satsuki's line of sight is suddenly piling up on upon another.

Maybe Satsuki also feels glad that the four of them is reunited, so she showed a gentle smile.

## Part 10

"We'll be back right after the audience is done. You may have a private conversation during that time"

"YES ! "

After Satsuki's finished saying that, a reply came to her right away.

"Shall we go"

"Yes"

With a nod, Rio and the others are turning around and then left the room.

Thereupon, at that time.

"Haruto-san ! ..... Uhm....."

Takahisa was calling to stop him.

"Yes. What's the matter ? "

Rio stopped and then turned around to face him.

"Uhm..... My apologies ! I become too fired up and ended up saying such rude things last night"

Takahisa's apologizing while bowing deeply at him.

Rio's looking at him with a puzzled expression and then,

"That kind of thing is..... Family is important after all. It should be natural for you to be anxious since you're being separated from them. The matter about you becoming too fired up isn't unreasonable at all. Rather I should be the one who's apologizing to you"

Saying so, he was bowing back to Takahisa.

"No, you have no need to do that....."

Takahisa denied it in a hurry.

"No, as someone who only passing by, I certainly overstepped my boundaries. It was a statement to test you as their brother"

So Rio calmly told him about that.

Takahisa's looking in wonder at Rio's calm statement which is unbecoming of his young appearance.

He was an adult, moreover compared to that his ownself is——

Takahisa's chewing his lips in embarrassment.

"..... The things that I have to apologize about isn't only that. I even forgot to say my gratitude for you who's protecting them. .... Thank you very much. Thank you for protecting everyone and made it so that we can meet again like this"

Takahisa's bowing again as he's stressing on his words of gratitude.

Rio's calmly shaking his head in denial.

"It's good as long as everyone is happy. Well, see you then"

## Part 11

After saying so, Rio was smiling at Miharu and the others who are standing behind Takahisa.

When their eyes met, Miharu and the others are blushing as if embarrassed.

"Thank you very much ! Haruto-san ! Thank you....."

Miharu and the others are smphasizing their words of gratitude and then bowed to Rio.

Rio's replying with a nod to them.

Looking at that situation, Takahisa could feel that there's a strong and mutual trust between the four of them.

*"But, for what reason."*

Though the reason is unknown to him, he could feel that he's slightly perturbed by it.

Takahisa's shaking his head in panic to dispel such train of thought.

"Well then. Well then we'll excuse ourselves since we can't afford to be late"

Rio finally decided to leave the room due to the pressing time though he's still curious for the reason of Takahisa suddenly shaking his head.

"Yes, thank you very much"

Takahisa's hiding the strange anxiety in his heart and bowed down again to Rio who was already outside of the room.

# Chapter 104: The Feeling of Miharuru and The Others

## Part 1

After the three of Rio, Satsuki and Lilyana went to the audience chamber, the four people left in the room where Takahisa was staying at were finally able to calm themselves.

Sendou Takahisa, the hero, Sendou Aki, his step sister, and Sendou Masato, his little brother, and then Ayase Miharuru, the friend of those three.

Though the four of them were always together as if it was natural back on Earth, they were talking about a lot of things in delighted manner since they can meet under the same room like this.

They were reunited.

Despite being separated for a while, they could survive and stay healthy under such harsh conditions and then reunited like this.

As if it was fated.

Takahisa could only feel bottomless gratitude as he thought so.

"And just like that, the three of us were living together with Haruto-san during these three months"

Aki who became the main narrator was telling about what happened to them during this few months.

The things that she told about to Takahisa were truly just trivial matters.

They were already told beforehand by Rio about the things that they absolutely can't talk about to the third party, the things that shouldn't be told if possible, and the things that can be told.

In order to not create any contradictions in their story, they decided to match their stories with Aki.



Takahisa showed a helpless expression for a moment after he heard the digest version of their stories.

He was frustrated since he couldn't protect Miharu and the others with his own hand.

*"Why was the one who saved Miharu and the others Haruto and not me."*

"I'm glad then. Everyone's escaping from the fate of becoming a slave....."

In the first place, Takahisa held a strong reluctance to slavery.

Why they treat something like people life as a property.

Such savage and uncivilized system was downright contrary to the justice held by Takahisa.

Though he knew that it's something needed by the level of the civilization of this world, he still can't give his consent to it.

He feels shivers running down his spine just by imagining the three in front of him serving other people as a slave.

Especially what kind of things that Aki and Miharu would have gone through as women.

Though he may be slightly biased about it, they might become playthings of nobles distorted by their own desires.

Takahisa turned pale in an instant as he imagined that.

"....."

Just thinking about it made him feel an extremely nauseated.

His body turned cold and yet hot at the same time.

For some reason his body shivered.

Takahisa was gritting his own lips to suppress that feeling.

"Are you alright, Oniichan ? "

Aki anxiously asked Takahisa who showed such bad complexion.

"Y-Yes....."

Takahisa nodded with a pale face.

Though he could somehow stall things by nodding with a smile, it was impossible to hide it.

"Are you okay, Takahisa-kun ? "

"Yes, your face is pale you know ? "

## Part 2

Even Miharuru and Masato were worried about Takahisa.

"I'm okay you see"

Takahisa somehow bluffed about his condition with cramped smile.

To put it bluntly, it had zero persuasive power.

"Rather than that, I was truly grateful that Haruto-san is here"

Those were Takahisa's true feelings.

But, just by saying those words——

*"Why does my chest also feel this kind of suffocating feeling ? "*

*"Why am I thinking that I'm such a useless person ? "*

That was an envy and self-loathing.

He was vexed about the fact that he couldn't save Miharuru and the others by himself and the fact that Rio was the one who saved them. He hated that he was a coward and was jealous toward Rio.

But, Takahisa wasn't aware of those feelings.

Since on the other hand, he also felt grateful to Rio for saving Miharuru and the others.

"Uhn, Haruto-san. He's a bit scary sometimes but, definitely a kind person"

"Yeah, his cooking is also delicious. He's an awesome man whose cooking skill is on par with Miharuru-nee-chan ! "

Aki and Masato are praising Rio.

"I-I'm still less skilled than him you see. Haruto-san is awesome you know ? Though his hands are so big, his fingers are nimble, he also has an abundance of knowledge and experience....."

Miharuru's white cheeks were slowly turning red like ripe peach due to Masato praise.

Maybe because she knew just how much she was yearning for Rio in this current conversation.

With just that he can't think of Rio as a despicable person.

But, he already didn't want to hear them talk about how they're on a good terms with Rio.

He didn't have such composure to hear more about it.

The fact that Rio was together with them instead of himself, Takahisa didn't want to hear nor did he want to believe just how much they were happily spending their time with Rio.

He didn't have any confidence to do so.

He feels as if Miharuru and the others are changing so much compared to the time when they were on Earth.

And yet, he feels as if his own self hasn't changed that much compared to when he was on Earth.

He felt as if he was completely left behind by them.

Even now he wanted to just disappear somewhere due to his constant anxiety.

It made him want to rely on Lilyana.

But,

(I can't ! I swore. No, I have to change. Everyone is no longer separated. I'll be the one who protects everyone ! )

Takahisa was mustering all of his courage to make a new determination.

The future that he thought already lost is slowly returning to him.

He was absolutely unwilling to experience those feeling for a second time.

"Well, it's the matter from now on but....."

Takahisa's saying that while looking at them.

Thereupon, Miharuru and the others eyes became slightly gloomy but, Takahisa failed to notice that and kept on going.

## Part 3

"You may want to discuss this later but, everyone..... Won't you come with me ? I want the four of us to always stay together from now on. I'll protect everyone. I'll definitely protect all of you"

Takahisa said so with pleading-like tone.

A few second of silent fell upon the room.

"Can, you ? "

After asking so, Takahisa was looking at Aki cuddling his side closely.

"Ah, uhhm..... You see"

Aki was at lost and unable to reply properly.

Her eyes are filled with anxiety.

"What's matter ? "

Takahisa anxiously asked Aki who was stumbling with her words.

Maybe because Aki's serious expression turned into hesitating one thus,

"I can finally meet after a long time, as expected, I want to be with oniichan. .... But, is that okay ? I feel much indebted to Haruto-san, and by separating like this....."

She replied timidly.

She wants to be together with Takahisa, her older brother.

That are her true feelings without any kind of falsehood.

Aki decided that by herself based on the stories told by Satsuki and Rio.

But, she couldn't feel satisfied at the same time.

After living with Rio for few months, it has now also become something that feels natural to Aki.

She really can't bring herself to just say "Okay then, good bye" just like that.

Moreover, they completely received the favor from Rio.

Maybe because leaving Rio's place just as it is feels slightly ungrateful to her.

Even Aki came to feel that.

"EH? Ah, no, that is....."

Takahisa was at lost for words to her unexpected reply.

He was believing in that Aki and the others will come under him unconditionally.

He didn't even imagine anything about them doing something like hesitating to follow him.

(Maybe that just how much bigger his existence is for Aki and the others.....)

Takahisa was tightly grasping his fist as if to divert the hard to describe feeling that was boiling inside him.

Though they were separated by no less than three months, those time felt like forever to them.

It seems as if there was an invisible wall which made him completely unable to break in.

"Naturally..... I'm thinking of giving my gratitude to Haruto-san. If you're so inclined about it, you can even bring him along"

## Part 4

Takahisa said those words as if feeling embarrassed in some sense.

It's not like he's not understand the meaning of Aki's words either.

Since he felt like giving his gratitude to Rio in the form of something without even a need to say it.

"Yeah. I think it's okay if we could go along with Haruto-san but....."

Aki's speaking ambiguously.

*"Why?"*

Though even she couldn't understand the reason, Aki's instinctively avoiding the figure of Rio amongst the four who's in this place.

That might be why.

She really can't bring the image of Rio coming along with them.

"I see..... So..... What about you two ? "

Takahisa's asking to Miharu and Masato who's sitting in front of him.

"Yup, I also don't want to be separated from Haruto-anchan. It's as Aki-neechan have said, And I'm also still in the middle of learning swordsmanship"

Masato's replied awkwardly.

Takahisa's eyes opened wide in astonishment.

"S-Swordsmanship ? "

That's absurd.

Masato's a kid who's yet to be 12 years old.

Takahisa showed confused face as he thought so.

When one says swordsmanship, it's basically a skill for the sake of combat with preamble to use it for killing someone.

He knew that very well since he himself is learning swordsmanship in the

castle.

Such young Masato also learning about combat skill.

"Yeah, it's for self-defense. He even bought a real sword for me. I couldn't bring it with me right now since I'm giving it to custody before entering the castle"

"Na~~....."

Takahisa's dumbfounded in Masato who's replying nonchalantly.

Masato's still an elementary grade student if measured with Earth's standard.

He couldn't even make a moral decision like that of an adult.

And yet, teaching swordmanship to him by using real sword——

It was severely conflicting with Takahisa ethic as someone who was raised peacefully as Japanese person.

"You can't hold a real sword. You're still a kid, Masato"

Takahisa harshly reflexively rebuked on him as his brother.

Since he absolutely will protect Masato.

There's no need for him to do something like fighting.

"What are you talking about. So is that to mean I can learn swordmanship if I'm an adult ? There's demon-like being around the world you know"

"You have no need to go to such dangerous place yourself ! "

"Ha~h ? This is the kind of world in which large amount of demons are going as far as entering the city. It won't be enough unless I can at least protecting my own safety"

"I've said that I'll be the one who's protecti-..... Wait a minute. The demons are rushing toward the city ? Don't tell me, everyone is being attacked too ? "



## Part 5

Takahisa asked as if scolding Masato due to the shock from his remark.

His important younger brother is doing something like fighting with his life on the line in a place unknown to him, there's no way he can overlook such situation.

"..... We're just being protected"

Masato's pouting and replied with vexed tone.

Rio has already told them to not tell anyone about Aisia, Celia and the rock house.

Therefore, he has no choice but to be careful with his words.

"But, I thought that I can't always become the protected side. At the beginning I treated it like sports or game but, now it's different ! "

"That's just natural! This place isn't a world of game ! It was a skill for the sake of killing human. When brandishing your sword in battle is when you're going to kill someone"

"I know that ! Haruto-anchan taught me that too. He never let me to go to actual combat since it's still too early for me. But, I hate it when I'm only being protected ! "

"..... You might go kill someone you know ! "

"I know that ! "

Dangerous atmosphere is beginning to form between the two of them as they delivered such verbal war.

Takahisa being surprised by his little brother's unreasonable train of thought and, Masato kept resisting his big brother's oppression.

Takahisa only wants to protect his little brother, Masato's hating the fact that he's only on the side of the protected ones, it's just like quarrel between siblings.

A form of anxiety is slowly forming inside Takahisa.

"As expected, you must come with me. Are you going to live such dangerous life?. You can be at ease in the castle"

Takahisa said those words stemming from his sense of responsibility as their guardian.

"Ha~h ? No way. I've said that I'm still in the middle of swordsmanship training"

Masato refused immediately.

"You can learn about that in the castle too. You can learn properly from the knight"

"NO. Haruto-anchan is better"

Both of them are staring at each other without any side willing to yield.

"H-Hey. Please stop it ! You two"

"Of course it is. We have finally reunited after a long time"

Aki and Miharuru were trying to mediate the quarrel of this pair of siblings.

"It's because Aniki is just too unreasonable "

Masato was suddenly saying that while averting his face.

"..... That isn't something you should say after arriving this far right ? "

Takahisa heaved a sigh as he said that to repel his anger.

"Certainly..... At first, I also hated the sight of Masato learning swordsmanship and I don't want to see him like that even now but,....."

## Part 6

Aki's speaking ambiguously.

To be honest, Aki wasn't be able to bring herself to see Masato learning swordsmanship.

Because despite the usually kind and gentle person, Rio is frightening when teaching swordsmanship.

But, recently she came to an understand the reason why Rio's extremely strict training Masato.

When she saw the swarms of demons who came so close to the vicinities of the rock house that time, it couldn't be helped that something like morals and reasons be blown away in front of such scene.

Above all else, Aki understood very well that learning swordsmanship is Masato's own wish.

For this reason, a bud, a feeling of wanting to respect Masato determination as his older sister was born inside Aki.

But on the other hand, it doesn't mean that she can't understand Takahisa worries either.

She's in pinch of choosing which one's determination she should held respect to.

Aki couldn't give an immediate reply.

"..... Don't tell me you guys are learning swordsmanship too ? "

Takahisa asked Miharuru and Aki with a stiff expression.

"We're not. Uhm..... The thing we learn is just a simple self-defense arts with stick"

Aki's shaking her head in denial with "Uhuhn".

"I see....."

Takahisa showed a slightly relieved expression.

It seems he doesn't feel that much opposition if it's just at the level of a stick.

Whether it's edged tools or not, or whether it's the assumption of killing people with further investigation in mind, that might become a great separating line inside Takahisa.

"Anyway, I wish that everyone would come with me. Since I'll be cooperating with Lilyana to protect everyone"

Takahisa said those words again with strong determination inside.

He wants to spend his time together with them, laughing along like back when they were on Earth.

He also wanted to introduce Lilyana to Miharuru and the others.

If it's her, she'll be getting along very well with everyone.

There's no one who'll become a hindrance.

No one will make things difficult for them.

He'll go back to Saint Stellar kingdom with everyone.

Takahisa was wishing as if yearning for it— —

"Sorry. I won't go with Takahisa-kun"

Miharuru said that with a decisive expression but she also sounded sad like saying such a line that will make a clear cut to those yearnings.

Takahisa head become pure white after hearing the clear cut rejection of the girl he always loved.

"W-Why..... ? "

Takahisa said those words with an haggard voice.

Why— —

Weren't the four of them always together back on Earth.

And he expected that it should be so in their future too.

Get back their time and their world, the future that should supposedly be lost, bit by bit.

And yet, why is this happening ?

## Part 7

"I'm sorry. I'll stay at Haruto-san's place"

Miharu replied with bitter-like voice.

Her answer crushing Takahisa's dream.

Is this Miharu's choice.

Even more important than the childhood friend with whom she spend how many years till now.

For someone with whom she spent no less than three months with——

"E-Everyone has finally reunited you know ? "

Takahisa said those words with almost crying-like voice.

"I want to be together with everyone too"

"Then, with everyone——"

"Is Satsuki-san included in the "Everyone" that Takahisa-kun just said ? Is Haruto-san included in it ? "

".....Eh?"

Takahisa showed a befuddled expression to Miharu words.

"..... We're currently not together with everyone you know. You should understand what I mean right ? "

Miharu's spinning her words in such an elegant manner.

Takahisa belonging to Saint Stellar kingdom, Satsuki belonging to Galwark kingdom, there's Rio who lives by himself——

Following someone means that they must bid their farewell to someone else.

They're bound to hurt someone with their choice.

Even so, they still have to make their choice.

After thinking carefully now, Miharu already found her answer.

She always worried by herself about this matter ever since she heard of Satsuki's whereabouts from Rio.

And then, she felt that she had to give her own answer when the time came upon her.

"S-Such things shouldn't be happening"

Takahisa's saying that in reflex.

Thereupon, Miharu showed a sad smile for some reason.

"Such things have happened you know. It was truly difficult to meet Satsuki-san and Takahisa-kun in this way you know ? "

"W-What..... Is so difficult about it ? "

"Everything is thanks to Haruto-san you know. Thanks to him we can meet again like this. We've become such burden to Haruto-san since we basically can't do anything"

"I know about that. That's why I'm truly grateful for him, moreover——"

"This gratitude is my own self"

Miharu's words cut Takahisa's sentence.

"I can't let another person express my gratitude after troubling Haruto-san up till now. Of course that's a different story if Haruto-san also doesn't mind to be with me from now on but....."

## Part 8

Takahisa was speechless.

He wanted to keep Miharuru by his side but, he can't find any words to stop the current her.

Despite slightly faltering, the current Miharuru has a resolute expression.

It's the first time Takahisa has seen her reacting in this way.

"This..... Is my own feeling"

Miharuru said those words with slightly stiff voice while a transient smile surfaces on her face.

He felt strong resolution from that voice of her.

"But you see, there's no need for Masato-kun and Aki-chan to go as far as following after me....."

Aki and Masato were gulping in silence as they saw the smile that's shown by Miharuru.

"..... Miharuru-oneechan"

Aki called Miharuru's name with an expression as if she was going to cry.

"All of us are siblings. If we can be together, I think we should be together. Of course it's not on me to decided that but....."

Miharuru told that to them with a vexed expression since she can properly convey her feelings.

"I gave my answer after properly thinking about it but, I want you to stop making us give out our answer quickly since I need to prepare myself. At least, not when Takahisa-kun and Masato-kun are having quarrelling atmosphere. .... Right ? "

Miharuru said those words to the three of Sendou family siblings as if gently soothing them.

Masato showing an awkward expression might be due to the repercussion of



him suddenly getting on fire.

"If Miharu-nee-chan says so..... Well, I'll consider it"

Masato's replied bluntly.

"Takahisa-kun too. You can't scold Masato without understanding him you know ? "

"I..... I know that but....."

*"It's shouldn't be like this."*

*"I want to be together with you."*

*"There's no use unless you were there."*

His chest became awfully noisy and he unintentionally shouted his feeling aloud.

"Anyway, can't we stop this talk for now ? It's painful looking at us quarreling despite we finally reuniting again after such a long time. Let's think about it slowly for today and talk about this again tomorrow. Right ? "

It won't turn into a peaceful conversation with their current situation.

She felt that they should just relish their feelings right now.

Moreover, Miharu thought that she needed a bit more time.

"U-Uhn. You're right ! Though everyone could finally meet again after such long time, we can't just go firing such dangerous air around. Right, Masato, Oniichan"

Aki forces herself to be as bright as possible as an approval to Miharu's proposal.

Since Aki also felt that things will get dangerous at this rate.

Aki grasped Takahisa's, sitting by her side, hand.

## Part 9

"Aki....."

Takahisa's line of sight met with Aki.

Takahisa's eyes were like that of a baby who will cry at any time.

Aki chest tightened seeing her brother like that.

"Oniichan. I'll go with you..... Let's think of a way to be together with everyone? Right?"

Aki was muttering those words with a voice that only him can hear it.

".....Thank you. Thank you"

Due to Aki's words, a glimmer of hope could be seen shining inside the pupils of Takahisa.

Yes.

*It's not like the result has been decided.*

*There must be some kind of method.*

*"Didn't I just swore to do that".*

*"I won't let go of anyone again, and I'll protect them."*

*"And yet, I can't whine over something like this."*

*"Since it's as Miharuru said before, we can meet again."*

*"I still have time left."*

*"No need to force her to quickly give her answer."*

*"I've Aki and Lilyana, we definitely will be able to do something."*

*"If it's me who's a hero, I definitely will be able to do that."*

*"For sure——"*

# Chapter 105: Audience

## Part 1

Inside of the audience room which boasted of it's high ceiling, Rio, draped on loaned etiquette uniform of a knight, met Francois Galwark.

Many royalties and nobilities from each and every factions are attending inside, the atmosphere inside of the room is that of a solemn one.

Amongst them wasn't just Satsuki, Lilyana, Liselotte and her father, Cedric, there's also Flora and duke Euguno.

Even the other nobles who met with Rio in the evening party can be seen all over the place.

The people who is in this place came after hearing about this audience.

In that audience, Rio's telling the tale from the time he met Miharu and the others till he met Satsuki.

"——Thus, I'm sheltering the hero's three friends, and will doing so till this evening party"

Rio then lowered his head toward Francois in a magnificent way.

"Haruto. Your achievement for protecting the friends of the heroes who became separated and your effort to reunite them is truly a great one. It was for a great cause"

Francois who's sitting on his throne on the stage is praising Rio with a haughty tone.

"Your highness, may I ? "

Choosing the right time when the flow of the conversation is interrupted, one plump noble was asking for permission to speak.

He's a high-ranked noble who's famous in Galwark kingdom, duke Clement Gregory.

"Fine, you may"

Francois is giving his permission to Clement.

Though he heard that Clement was the exact opposite party of duke Kretia house, Clement sends a sidelong glance to Liselotte and Cedric.

"Haruto-dono achievement in protecting the friend of hero-dono was certainly a wonderful one. But, I've just one question. Why, he, who've a private information regarding the information of the friend of the hero-dono which unknown to the country, didn't inform the hero ? "

Clement asked that question.

"That's right but, if you don't mind it, will you tell me your true intention ? "

Francois asked Rio.

"Yes, I'm nothing more than a humble commoner. Thus I'm not reckless enough to report about today's matter to the country and I didn't think that it'll be trusted"

"Well, that's reasonable"

Francois agreed to Rio's words.

For this world which is closely related to social status, social status is closely related to influence and trust.

If Rio, who doesn't have both of them is suddenly saying "I'm protecting the friend of the hero", royalties who are really clasping their hand in honesty is truly a rare case.

"Above all, they're truly anxious after being separated from their friends and families. To make the matter worse, they couldn't even communicate using Strahl region language"

Rio explained in a dull tone and his voice is slightly resounding inside the room.

## Part 2

"Wait, Haruto. If they can't communicate with words, why you can speak with them ? "

That was an expected question.

Which means that the people except for the hero can't communicate with words, even if it's badly hidden away, he had already given unnatural information.

"Both of my parent who used to live in Yagumo region have a strange magic tool. I used that"

Rio replied with a fluent tone as if he already assumed that question beforehand.

"Hou. What kind of magic tool was it ? "

"Even I'm unable to understand the theory and the way to manufacture it. But, it's effect is mutual understanding, it's the so called communication with the other party" [TL : Are we suddenly arrived in Gundam 00 universe and the tool's name is "Gundam", the best Gundam series for me btw]

"What..... A convenient item"

Francois unintentionally let out such admired-like voice.

Even the other nobilities and royalties are half-doubting his words but, no one can prove Rio's words seeing that no one in this place have ever gone to Yagumo region.

"So I used the tool to teach them Strahl region language"

"Fumu, do you have that magic tool with you ? "

"Regrettably..... Though it's an item which is the memento of my parents, it seems to have limited life-span, it broke by the time they already can remember words....."

Rio said that while showing a guilty expression.

"Mu, I see..... Since it was a memento, it might be a precious item, aren't it ? "

"Well, it seems my parents were using it when they migrated to Strahl region. It should've satisfied after fulfilling its duty"

"I see..... Well, let's put this topic to rest. Our stories are strayed from the topic. How far we were before. If I remember it correctly, it was the part where the hero friends are being anxious"

Saying so, Francois was staring at Rio.

"That's right. They're obviously put into a temporary unstable mentality. I can't help but feeling slightly anxious to send them with their current situation to the third party. Yes, I feared to do so"

Rio's explaining the situation with absolutely no hesitation in his voice.

"Thus, I came with my own humble opinion to telling the hero directly about them. Fortunately I'm blessed by fortunes to getting closer to Liselotte-sama. The detailed order is as I say before. This is all I have to say"

Rio was lowering his head again after his story reaching that point.

"Though I feel that there's no contradiction point in his story, wasn't that your view. Clement ? Or did you notice inconsistency in the story ? "

Francois's letting out a meaningful smile and then asked to Clement Gregory.

"There's none"

# Part 3

Clement replied with a hard to describe smile.

"In that case, we must express our formal gratitude in his achievement for protecting the friends of the hero. Doing things like protecting strangers, much less to say they can't speak in our language isn't something that anyone can just do"

Francois told so as he nodded.

"Haruto. The matter of you protecting the friend of the two heroes was a great cause. Let me praise it"

"I'm truly grateful for such praise which is undeserved for my humble self"

Rio's expressing his gratitude while kneeling on the floor.

"Liselotte. I have to praise for your action as well. Your great insight in discovering heroic figure like Haruto is as splendid as usual. As expected of Cedric..... No, as expected of Liselotte Kretia"

Fransois praised Liselotte's action while smiling as if he's truly happy about it.

It's as clear as day that Rio will experience difficulties to make contact with Satsuki without her help.

Though it's just a coincidence piling up one after another, by discovering Rio's talent, she eventually bringing a great cause for national interest.

It's a praise for that.

"My humble self is extremely delighted. Your majesty"

Liselotte's pinching the cuffs of her dress and told her gratitude with a ladylike gesture.



On the other hand, Satsuki's looking in admiration from the side at the figure of Liselotte and Rio who's being praised by Francois.

Now, it's her turn to confirm whether there was any difference in Rio's

explanation.

(Such great thing huh. Now I'm doing things like conducting myself magnificently with the king as my opponent)

She hears from the person himself that Rio is a former japanese and half-convinced that Liselotte is also a former japanese too. ʘ

Even if minute attitude is overlooked when facing against the monarch of a country, conversing without being timid while paying respect on top of that isn't something that can be done by a japanese.

Satsuki couldn't be helped but to revise her thought, those two already completely became the inhabitants of this world.

(..... Eh, even if Liselotte-san is alright but, Haruto-kun shouldn't be that much older than me right ? )

So, Satsuki's imagination is going around and round.

Though she doesn't know how old they were in their previous life, no matter how you look at it they're much older than Satsuki when adding up to their current age.

(Because of that, aren't I acting way too familiar with Haruto-kun ? )



## Part 4

She's recalling her speech and conduct when interacting with Rio up till now.

No matter how she's looking at it, it's not the tone that's used for someone older than herself.

*"Yup, I'm acting overly familiar with him."*

Satsuki thought so.

She was careless since his appearance is that of the same generation as her.

He surprised her since the first time they met with telepathic communication, he's greatly influencing her heart with the matter of Miharuru and the others.

(Uh..... What should I do. Should I'm talking to him with formal language..... The next time I talk to him ? )

Satsuki thought while looking at the figure of Rio who's perfectly responding to the words of Francois.

Interacting by paying respect when the other party is the older one is the basic stance of Satsuki.

In that case, it might be better to build a relationship based on the mental age of the previous life from now on, was what she thought.

(I thought that he wasn't your ordinary boy as he can release such calm atmosphere but, apparently it was the truth. I see.....)

The more she thinks about it, the more she's aware that Rio is an adult.

It somehow made Satsuki sad,

(Geez ! Why I'm worrying about such thing ! And yet Haruto-kun is so quiet)

She was unintentionally glaring at Rio during the audience while embracing the feeling close to that of resentment.

Thus, while Satsuki's thinking about various of such things,

"Well then, even when expecting the matter of you protecting the friend of

the hero, our country is greatly in debt to Haruto"

The audience is advancing smoothly.

"Because Haruto contributed greatly in repulsing the bandits last night. It's our custom since a long time ago to repay with a reward for his contribution"

Somehow the topic's moving toward the matter of the bandits last night.

"How's that, Haruto. Will you work for this country? I've made an arrangement to appoint you as a knight of our country"

"Eh.....?"

Satsuki let out a slightly surprised voice to the unexpected turn of events.

(Haruto-kun, working for this country? )

She's chewing the meaning behind those words.

If he's working for this country, she'll be able to do something like meeting with Rio from now on.

It's not so difficult either to place him by her side if she's using her authority as a hero.

Suddenly realized such things, Satsuki was looking at Rio.

☆☆☆☆☆☆

"I'm extremely delighted to be bestowed by such special favor. But, a greenhorn like me is greatly lacking in ability. I'm truly grateful to the point of unable to expressing it but, I'm unable to accept it"

## Part 5

Rio stated his rejection in a gentle manner in order to not worsen their relationship.

"Hou ? You've no intention to become a knight ? I learn that you're worthy of being one"

Francois asked as if it's a surprise to him.

He thought that Rio will try to gain a fulfilled life by selling a favor to the country or Satsuki but, this situation is completely out of his expectation.

"Yes, this humble me is lacking for such ability"

Rio's replying with humble tone.

"Fumu, is that so..... In that case, do you have something you're wishing for ? Just say it"

Francois asked while his hand is tracing his jaw.

"I never thought of doing this to receiving a reward. The matter of repulsing the bandits was also due to the effort of the knights who was in that place at that time. It's my humble opinion to refusing the reward if it's possible"

The people inside audience was greatly shaken by Rio who's refusing the reward.

"Hou, so you means that you have no need for a reward ? "

A curious light is lit inside Francois eyes.

"Yes, that's my wish"

Rio's easily rejected the reward without any short of hesitation or lingering affection in his tone.

That's obvious.

Because Rio has nothing he's wishing for in the form of property or status given from a country.

More than anything else, he hated the fact of him taking care of Miharu and

the others for money and status.

Since today's reward wasn't given strictly for the matter of repelling the bandits and protection of Miharuru and the others.

Francois is staring in amazement to Rio which seemingly lacking in regard to greed.

"..... Kukukuku, so you say that you've no need for money or position. It's a good thing that you're behaving completely unlike that of a commoner, truly an interesting man"

Francois's unable to endure it anymore and thus laughing for the first time as if he's truly happy about it.

Normally one will desire a reward to become a knight who belong to the chivalric order.

He has never seen anyone in his kingdom refusing a reward flat out without even taking a long time to think about it without any greed in their eyes.

Francois couldn't read the true nature of the human called Rio.

"Yosh, I've decided. I'll grant a title of honorary knight upon you"

Francois said that a while after regaining his composure.

The inside of the audience chamber is growing noisy.

"EH ? But, I....."

Rio's perplexed to the conversation that flowing toward unexpected direction.

Though he don't even know what is that honorary knight, it might have nothing to do with nobility since the prefix is "knight".

## Part 6

"What, it's not a title which make you have a responsibilities toward our country. At the present era it's a title given to someone who did a great military exploit to our country and it's not limited just to the citizen of this country. Different with normal knight, it's not like you're going to receive a stipend nor will you become the retainer of the country. In other words, it's nothing more than a title. But, you'll receive the same treatment with the nobles of our country inside this country. You can even go to the castle as long as you're following the necessary procedure"

Francois is carefully continuing with his explanation as if reading Rio's doubt.

As long as one is hearing that explanation, it seems that peerage can be given to the foreigner.

"I'm an unknown person. For you to bestowing a title which made it possible for me to coming to the castle with just that is....."

"It's good enough. I already decided on it. Since it'll shame our country if I'm not giving a reward to someone who's showing such great exploit. You saved the life of royalties.

The demand to bestowing a reward upon you isn't just coming from Michael, Charlotte and house of duke Kretia, it's also coming from princess Flora, the representative of Restoration, and princess Lilyana, the representative of Saint Stellar kingdom. Just be obedient and receive your reward"

Despite Rio attempt to refusing the reward, Francois blatantly forcing it to Rio.

Francois is taking a firm stance.

Seeing that the king already made his decision, Rio can't bear the act of disapproving that.

(Though I'm grateful for it if it's come to ease a way to meet Satsukisan.....)

Rio's showing a troubled-like face.

To be honest he didn't want that reward.

But,

"My greatest gratitude for your blessing....."

Rio decided to express his gratitude while sighing inside.

By the way, the weight of honorary knight is way greater than what Rio expected.

Though honorary knight is indeed a title which is given to someone who raised military exploit just as Francois said, despite have the same "Knight" title, it's completely different from an ordinary knight.

More than the fact that it's not bound by country despite it's rank, they won't become a military employ, so their action isn't bound to the country.

But, in time of emergency they can give a command to the soldiers, similar to the normal knight in that place, they can even lead as much as a platoon of personnel.

In short, it's a trusted honorary position which is given with a special privilege.

It's a position in which one is given a special privilege despite having no duty, the hurdle of investiture is higher and couldn't even be compared to a normal knight. [TL : SYSTEM MESSAGE (YOU UNLOCKED A SPECIAL TITLE "HONORARY KNIGHT")]

It's a title which won't be given unless the person itself is directly recognized by the king as someone without any problem both in personality or military exploit, the hurdle becoming even higher in case the object in this case is a foreigner.

Therefore it's just a natural thing that the nobilities in the audience chamber are astonished due to envy and awe toward someone who's awarded with the title of honorary knight.

Some of them are even dissatisfied with the fact that Rio's receiving an investiture of honorary knight.

But, it's also an undeniable truth that Rio's arrived first to save Flora, repelling close to half the number of the bandits and protecting the friends of the heroes.

It's already hard for them to voice their dissatisfaction with such a line up of exploits.

More than anything else, it's because there's joint signature coming up to rewarding his exploit from the nobilities who was saved by him.

In the end, even the dissatisfied nobilities has no choice but to watch from the side.

"There's a custom of granting an alias to the one who receiving the title of honorary knight. That's right....."

# Part 7

Francois was looking at Rio while humming so.

There’s a pensive look on his face before it’s changed to a grin-like smile as if he’s come to think upon something a while later and then,

"Yosh, I’m bestowing upon you with the alias 《Black Knight》. Black is a color which won’t be stained by any other colors. It’s a suitable title for an unpredictable child such as you right"

He said so with a haughty tone.

It’s another reason for jealousy for a honorary knight to receive his alias from the king but,

(Black..... Knight ? )

Rio face unintentionally showing a beffudled expression to the unexpected turn of event.

Rio’s train of thought completely halted for a few seconds.

When he regained a bit of composure after that, he recited that name again in his head.

*“Black Knight——”*

*“What’s with that name?”*

*“This title is slightly embarrassing.”* [TL : “Black Knight” is a chuuni title if you’re asking for the reason]

*“Like hell I want to call myself with such embarrassing title in front of anyone.”*

But, such feeling aren’t coming out of his head.

"Yes, I’ll humbly receive the title"

And thus, Rio’s receiving his title with the highest manner.

(..... Maybe I’m just unlucky today)



How things turned out this way.

He might be jinxed somewhere, came into Rio's mind.

When he's looking around while in the posture of lowering his head, his line of sight met with Satsuki who's in the corner of the room.

Satsuki's raising her hand to her lips as if putting her willpower to not laugh at him.

(I'm being made fun at. I'm not even asking for this reward)

Somehow or another Satsuki's guessing his own thought as if it's a pleasant thing, so Rio's lowering his head even deeper.

"Moreover, from now on I'll allow you to have a family name. Since I won't set the time for you to decide on it, you may take your time to carefully think about it"

"..... As you wish"

"The official ceremony will be done during tonight evening party. That's our plan. That's all"

And thus, the audience came to a end.

Rio was completely exhausted due to the unexpected turn of event while pondering that he might become the center of attention again tonight.

# Chapter 106: After The Audience

## Part 1

After the audience, Rio invited Liselotte as he decided to talk to her.

Though there was a proposal from Satsuki whether or not to bring her along to Miharuru and the others' room, she's heading towards the Miharuru and the others' room alone.

He wanted to report about today's matter to Liselotte.

And then, the place they were going to was the lounge of the royal castle.

Any noble attending the castle could use a private room as long as they apply for it.

But in that place, Rio was facing Liselotte sitting on an antique sofa.

Aria Governess, her maid, was fulfilling her duty preparing the tea by Liselotte's side in silence.

Aria's skill in erasing her existence is superb, she doesn't cause any uncomfortable feelings to her master or the guests inside the room.

She definitely was the finest example of chamberlain.

"Excuse me"

It was fast but, she politely finished her work and gave out her tea.

After bowing lightly, she retreated to a corner of the room.

And then, when everything was prepared, Liselotte began to talk.

"First let me congratulate you, Haruto-sama, for your inauguration as an honorary knight"

"Thank you very much. To be honest, I'm feeling ashamed since I don't deserve such an important title though....."

Rio showed a troublesome expression as he said his gratitude.

"But, I think it'll be more advantageous if you can use it wisely, isn't it ? "

Liselotte told that while tilting her head.

Despite not belonging to any country, Rio will be treated as an official noble in Galwark kingdom from this moment onward.

The difference of social position is absolute in Strahl region——

Though there are some nobilities who are dealing with commoners without discrimination, like Liselotte is, those groups are the overwhelming minority.

There are nobles who look down only by hearing that the other party is a commoner, the truth is, only nobilities, and not commoners, receive various levels of favourable treatments.

From today onward, Rio was joining those group of nobilities.

Moreover, he's completely different from those worthless nobilities.

Though his rank and treatments are different from those of ordinary nobility status, when it came to honorary knight and battling, it's a title which will bring about envy from any nobility who knows about it.

It's a title with name brand called "Directly recognized by the king because both of their achievements and abilities", it's a position which is much more special than a mere honorary title——

Either way, there's no disadvantage in having such title, it certainly will make it easier for him to move around inside of Galwark kingdom.

Speaking of demerits, even if there are so many practical uses being an honorary knight, they're still part of their mother country.

(Well, I think that it might be your majesty's idea to established the fact and make Haruto-sama play an active role as an honorary knight though. It seems he has some others ideas in addition but.....)

Though this was nothing more than a simple analysis from Liselotte, she was vaguely aware that Rio might be suspecting that point too.

Therefore, Liselotte didn't try to do anything like talking about her idea.

"Yes. On the other hand, I think that I'm not that much of use as a noble"

Rio said those words with calm tone.

"So that's the reason ? If it's Haruto-sama who has become a noble, I'm sure that you'll become one who's cut above the rest"

## Part 2

Liselotte showed a dumbfounded expression to his words.

"That's just an overestimation. Associating with the noble people is too much for a person of humble origin like me. It would sink deep into my body in today's evening party"

"There's almost no problem in your etiquette though....."

"That was nothing more than a papier mache to keep it up on the surface. My defect would come out immediately if they can see even a minute detail of it"

Rio smiles wryly as he shakes his head in denial.

"Fufu, such such humility"

When she said so, there was an impish smile on her face. Liselotte then held her tea cup elegantly to her lips.

(It makes me more worried the more I think about it huh.....)

Liselotte was strongly attracted to an existence called Rio.

Right now, the youth in front of her has said that he went to an academy of a certain country long time ago.

If it goes by his birthplace, the Bertram kingdom, there were high possibilities that place was that one.

But, the only national educational institute in Bertram kingdom is nothing but the royal academy, when it came to the private institution, the numbers are swelling several times.

If she goes by Rio's words, who called himself a commoner, the possible institutions decrease even further with the addition that they were teaching etiquette of nobilities there.

Only the wealthy amongst the common people can go to such educational institutions.

(A child of an emigrant going to a school for wealthy people ? It's not like it's

impossible but.....)

Liselotte couldn't come up with an answer no matter how much she thought about it.

Rio was nonchalantly drinking his tea in front of her.

Though she unintentionally had an impulse to ask thoroughly about it, as expected, she managed to stop herself from doing so, which might come from a common phrase "That's unbecoming of a lady". [TL : How unlady-like]

Though she could throw a probing-like question, the thing such as Rio being wary towards her isn't her intention.

In the end, she has no choice but to wait till he speaks about it himself.

"Anyhow, by all means, please come if you have something you want to consult about in the future. Since I will give a hand if you're fine with it"

Liselotte told him that after politely putting her tea cup on the saucer.

"Thank you very much"

Rio said his gratitude to the girl who was nicely smiling.

"It's me who should have said that. Since it was thanks to Haruto-sama that there wasn't any considerable damage during yesterday evening party"

"No, something like that is——"

"It true. That's the absolute truth. The guard knights who were scattered around the venue were at disadvantage against the bandits who were rushing straight toward their target"

## Part 3

Just when Rio was about to deny his accomplishment, Liselotte words cut through them.

There were nothing more than five guard knights who were protecting the targeted royalties, and the number of bandits was 14 people.

There was almost three times difference in their combat potential.

"No matter how much you're trying to be humble, it's a fact that Haruto-sama did the work of several knights alone, by yourself. Thanks to that the reinforcements could have come in time, thus saving the lives of every royalty in that place"

Liselotte told him that in an orderly manner.

"Naturally, me included. Haruto-sama has saved my life for the second time. Thank you very much"

When there was no objection coming from Rio, Liselotte followed her previous words with an expression of gratitude.

"I was indebted to Liselotte-sama long time ago. This matter is just too cheap compared to that. I should be the one who's apologizing"

Rio said those words with slightly troubled smile.

There was a question mark floating on her face when he told her that he's the one who's indebted to her.

"It's for hiding the information regarding the friend of Satsuki-sama. I'm using Liselotte-sama for this matter and ended up causing the current uproar"

Rio explained his reason for apologizing.

It seems Liselotte knew his circumstances but, she was still shaking her head slowly in denial.

"It's everyday occurrence for the nobilities to approach someone while hiding their true intention. Though I'm surprised by it, it's not like it caused some sort of harm to me"

Since nobilities were the creatures that set their relationship in accordance of mutual gains, it's very rare of them to build a relationship without any intent of profit behind it.

Anyhow, even their marriages are arranged by political interests.

It's a completely different case when the end result brought harm to her, then the other party who was being scolded over trivial matter every time wouldn't survive for long in the world of nobilities.

"Rather, it's thanks to Haruto-sama's action that even myself was receiving words of praise from your majesty. Therefore, please don't mind about it that much"

Liselotte said so while showing a slightly impish smile.

"I'm grateful that this humble self have been of some use but....."

"Yes. And that's enough of it"

Liselotte was nodding in satisfaction.

Rio replied with a silent nod.

"Nevertheless, boys and girls who can't speak with our language. You've done very well in protecting them, right"

"I was fortunate enough to have that memento magic tool. And I couldn't just abandon them who were walking in a deserted place with a puzzled expression"

"It was a splendid action. Though I've known that you could understand each other using that magic tool, you were using that tool to teach them right? "

"Yeah, it was really hard to explain it in a words but those three improved their language proficiency so much in those 3 month. Currently they have no difficulties using it in their daily conversation"



## Part 4

Rio was nonchalantly coating his lies as if it was not a big deal answering Liselotte questions.

"There are such convenient magic tools in Yagumo region huh. Or, could it be that Haruto-sama can speak in the language of the world of the heroes-sama ? "

Liselotte was staring at Rio's face as she asked that question.

"Yeah, somewhat"

Rio answered with vague smile.

"..... I see"

Liselotte was muttering after hearing those words with profound nuance.

"Are you interested in that matter ? "

Rio asked her while sending a gaze as if observing her.

"Yes. There's a world which is unknown to me. So, when I think about it....."

Liselotte showed a slightly awkward smile.

Rio smiled back at her gently and then,

(It seems that she's somehow believing the story about that magic tool for now)

He held the tea cup on his lips as he thought so. Though Miharu and the others have finally reached the level in which they can use the Strahl region language in daily conversation just recently, there's still some defect in their pronunciation.

Therefore, Miharu and the others aren't be able to speak in Strahl region language as their mother language so they can understand if it's just simple conversation.

Though the doubtful point is how can Rio understand the words of Miharu and the others.

Despite the most simple answer being because Rio can speak in their language[Japanese], the next question is why Rio can understand Japanese.

In the case the other party is someone who's a native of this world in truest sense aside, the degree of difficulties will be risen sharply when the other party is someone who was originally from earth.

Since there was a possibilities like "Could it be Rio who is—— The man called Haruto thar used to live in Japan ? ”.

Though it won't be strange to think that the people who used to live on earth would be probing around his circumstances.

The people who're currently aware that Rio was a former Japanese are Aisia, Celia, Miharu, Aki, Masato, Satsuki and then Latifa – it's those seven.

Though he was taking into account the other reincarnated people by the time he meet Latifa and Liselotte, by this point of time, he must include the transferred factor into his consideration with the appearance of the heroes.

Because from now on, those seven who are aware of the fact that Rio's a reincarnated person might change his course of action in the future, whether it'll become and advantage for him or not is something that's hard to predict.

Therefore, if it's truly needed aside, he won't especially made a grand declaration about himself being a reincarnated person.

"By the way, there shouldn't be any dissatisfaction from the friends of Satsuki-sama when they would live in Almond right ? ”

## Part 5

Liselotte was nonchalantly changing the topic.

There was a worry hidden beneath her statement——,

(Well, it's because Almond is overflowing with originally-from-earth-products)

Rio saw through her worry in an instant.

There are various kinds of originally-from-earth-product in Almond.

Majority of them using the original Japanese name.

Even if the heroes are capable of automatically translating the language of this world into Japanese thanks to their divine raiment, there are possibilities of guessing by the movement of the lips just like what Satsuki did.

Much less to say if it's from the side of Miharuru and the others who are learning the language of this world from the scratch, they'll naturally notice the abnormalities in the fact that Japanese is being used for the goods made by Rikka firm.

In fact, Miharuru and the others already noticed those unusual phenomena.

If it's someone as wise as Liselotte, it's not like persistently hiding her own secret in this situation will do any good to her.

——With that as the base of her anxiety.

*"Well then, how should I answer that question".*

Rio considered that right away.

"Yeah, they're able to spend a wonderful time in there"

Rio was playing dumb as he smiled while replying to her.

Liselotte stared at Rio's face and,

"..... I see, I'm glad then"

She said so with a meaningful smile.

Their gaze interlocking each other.

(She still has some doubt on me huh)

Rio guessed Liselotte's thoughts.

That's only natural.

The matter regarding Rio moving around Almond is known by her.

Even without those factors, the product of Rikka firm was circulating in the Galwark kingdom.

If one come upon that, though Miharu and the others are under the protection of Rio, it'll be stranger for them to not have a contact with originally-from-earth-product made by Rikka firm.

If that was the case, it's easy to imagine just how much doubt was held by Miharu and the others during those time when they were in Almond where they asked Rio.

Why there are product with Japanese names in this world? What's with the Rikka firm who made those product? And who's this Liselotte Kretia who's managing this Rikka firm?.

Naturally there are possibilities that Liselotte is only the sponsor, and it's not like there are no possibilities of someone else, who's a former Japanese aside from her, being the one who made those products.

Though the first time he met her, he was under deep prejudice that she's a reincarnated person seeing that there's plenty of clues, because it's not removing the possibilities of a transferred person after the heroes appeared.

But, the most doubtful person is still Liselotte, whichever the truth is, it still won't change the fact that there's some sort of secret hidden behind Rikka firm.

Therefore, there's some doubt about Liselotte.

And then, might be some sort of caution.

That's the current situation waiting in front of Rio.

(The fact will turn into conviction sooner or later. It might be better to wipe some of her suspicion by telling her certain amount of truth)

## Part 6

Though Rio can feign his ignorance right now, he's predicting that there'll be seeds of doubt remained inside Liselotte's mind.

Since there's no person who's not vigilance against someone persisting with his lies while being aware of their own secret.

But then, even Rio is measuring just how much is the value and the significance of that secret.

But, she's a noble, even if there's that merchant side of her, maybe she'll hate the fact of leaving even the slightest possibilities of someone else harming her.

What will Liselotte do after this with this kind of worry in her heart, maybe that's what she thinks in her heart.

Sooner or later, in the case where one wants to keep their secret still a secret, they might need to pay the bribe.

In that case, she might bribe him to keep her secret from Satsuki and Miharuru and co, or else, she might try assassinating them in the off chance of them leaking her secret.

Even Rio's not considering Liselotte to be a perfectly good person without any kind of dirty secrets.

Though she's a reliable ally, she definitely would be a troublesome existence once she become an enemy.

Carelessly provoking her is too reckless of a move for now, since she keeps amassing favorable relationships, it's definitely a better choice to keep their relationship as it is, if possible.

Seeing that Liselotte is a noble, and also a merchant, the possibilities of being backstabbed as long as there's unbroken pros and cons relationship between them is low.

Even Rio believed that based on his relationship with her up till now.

"The friends of Satsuki-sama are three people. Two amongst them are girls

but, they're truly grateful with the products made by Rikka firm you know"

Though Rikka firm is making wide varieties of product, amongst those product, the one geared toward woman are the best ones.

Though their circulation network and the production system aren't complete yet therefore they can't supply the provision and demand at every place at the same time, there's almost no products that you can't get when you're in Almond.

Rio knew of such stories since he kept his base around Almond.

"I'm very happy for such praise. Because it's a blessing for a merchant if their customers are pleased"

Liselotte replied to him with ambiguous smile.

"Even they were especially surprised by one part of the product made by Rikka firm"

"..... I see"

Liselotte was suddenly squinting her eyes as she say so.

"Though I'm curious whether there's some kind of secret in those products, I told them to not tell anyone in regard to that secret. And they agreed to my wish"

Rio answered while deliberately leaving what the secret is vague.

Thereupon, Liselotte was staring dumbfoundedly as if being attacked by a surprise.

"Why..... Did you do that ? "

"Because, although it would be a demerit if they were thoughtlessly revealing that to others, it won't bring any merit to them"

"Demerit..... Is it ? "

Liselotte was tilting her head as she asked that question.

"I've already tied by a contract with Liselotte-sama a while ago right"

## Part 7

Rio was hinting to her.

"..... As expected, so the people you want me to protect in the case of emergency with the contract are the friends of Satsuki-sama, aren't they ? "

"Yeah, three amongst the five. They're in an extremely dangerous situation as the friends of the hero. Thus it's better if they have many allies"

Rio told fluently.

Liselotte was listening that story with a serious expression.

"Thus, right now I want to ask Liselotte-sama to protect them to the extent of your power"

"That's..... Just natural. We're under such contract, aren't we"

Liselotte was nodding while agreeing with him.

"Thank you very much. Though I'm asking for their protection, I wish to do that with a good agreement with the other party, which is Liselotte-sama, from now on. That's my true wish without any falsehood in it"

"The other party of the contract, is it"

Liselotte said that as if trying to understand the meaning behind those words.

"Though I'm not a merchant, I know of powerful bond which ties one person to another with profit and loss. And then, both of us are currently profiting due to our contract"

While he said so, Rio was smiling lightly looking at Liselotte.

Liselotte also looked back at Rio.

Maybe because she understand what he means soon after that.

"..... I see. It have the most persuasive power as a merchant"

Liselotte lips are forming a smile as if happy with such a reply.

Even her vigilance which she had shown till sometimes ago were extremely

weakened.

"In short, I don't want to break the relationship with the current you. Despite contrary to my wishes, I'm already a noble starting from today. So, you're definitely a person who makes me want to keep a good relationship with"

Rio shrugged his shoulders as he said so.

"If that's the case. Since I also strongly wished to be a good contract partner to Haruto-sama from the very beginning....."

"In that case, that'll made this quicker. I swear that I won't reveal the secret regarding the products of Rikka firm. Nor I will looking for another means to reveal it"

"..... That's truly a wonderful promise for my side. But, are you really not worrying about it ? Even if there's some truth in the secret that you mentioned sometimes ago"

"Yeah, the secret of famous trading firm even in neighbouring countries are something that's beyond what I can handle. Even if I knew that secret, it doesn't mean that I can do something about it"

Rio shooked his head while smiling wryly.

Liselotte showed an impish smile and then,

"That's regrettable"

Said those words to Rio.

**Map of Strahl Region**





# Chapter 107: Rio Feeling And, The Start of The Third Day of Evening Party

## Part 1

After meeting with Rio, Liselotte's returning to the mansion of duke Kretia and then resting for a while in her own room.

Currently with only her trusted friend Aria inside of the room, Liselotte has completely flipped her "Work Mode Switch" to OFF.

"U~h, so tire~d"

After changing her attire to an easy to move one piece in her room, she's plunging herself as if collapsing on top of her soft bed.

As expected, Liselotte was worn out due to a heavy schedule and doing various things for the sake of attending the evening party in the capital in this few days.

"Fortunately"

Liselotte who's burying her face on the pillow is showing a happy expression from the slight gap of her face that peeking out of the pillow.

The people who know of her true face after she unfasten the mask of a lady is extremely few in number.

Aria was one of those few humans.

Thereupon, there's no change on her expression despite seeing the negligent Liselotte.

But then, Aria herself never shown that kind of huge reaction aside from a slight twitch of her eyebrows when she saw that side of Liselotte for the first time.

"Thank you for the hard work. Will you take a short nap till the start of the evening party? "

Aria asked while looking fondly at her lovely master who's loosened her guard.

"U~hn. I'm good. I want to think about something for a while"

Her reply is a tad slower than usual.

She picks up the cushion that was nearby and then hugging that cushion as she lifts her face to look at the ceiling of her room.

"Is it about Haruto-sama ? "

"That's right. I knew so many things from our meeting a while ago. And that's all of it..... Hey....."

Liselotte is letting out a weary sigh as she replied to Aria.

"Have you noticed some sort of trouble ? "

"It's not a trouble. It seems we'll be able to keep our favourable relationship even from now on"

Following after their meeting a while ago, Liselotte can feel that her relationship with Rio will keep as it is even after this.

She was certain about that.

Certainly, the matter of him knowing her greatest secret will put her under a disadvantageous situation but, she judged that she didn't need to worry about such things.

(In the first place, the matter of me using japanese names for our product has also acted like some sort of message to the people who are put under similiar circumstances as myself. Things like someone suddenly transferred from the other side is a bit of a unexpected case though)

When Liselotte's thinking of such things,

"Well then, which point is the one that's troubling you ? "

Aria asked with a clear voice.

"I was thinking of closing my distance with Haruto-sama a bit more from now on if possible but, the result is our distance remained as it was..... didn't it "

## Part 2

Liselotte's sighing while letting out her complaint.

She's been marking Rio and really wants to invite him.

That is absolutely nothing like only want to become a precious contract partner to use Rio's service as the intermediate between her and the craftsman of his finest liquor.

His calm and intellectual personality while being a gentle person himself, receiving an education which is meant for nobles despite being a commoner, his battle prowess which at least will easily be able to overwhelm several trained knights at minimum and unknown number at maximum, moreover, his artifact-class magic tool which can hold a large amount of things by manipulating space— —.

To be honest, he's way too good to be left as just a hidden talent.

"The way he brings himself is definitely great differences from the nobles and merchants who are usually facing Liselotte-sama. Even the way he's coping with the situation is also different"

"Right. You can say that he's not the kind of person who's moving for things like status or money"

After she changes to sitting position from her bed, Liselotte agreed with a yearning expression.

"But, seeing his inauguration as a honorary knight, the nobilities who'll come to interact with him from now on will keep increasing right ? "

The abilities and the existence of Rio is exposed in large scale amongst the nobilities and the royalties who was attending yesterday's evening party.

In addition to that, he even received the investiture of a honorary knight.

It'll be even stranger If that kind of existence is loitering around without being attached to any faction and yet not receiving any invitation.

But, even if he's from a small country when comparing to Galwark kingdom.

Nevertheless he's receiving the title of honorary knight in spite of not serving under Galwark kingdom which will in turn strengthen the relationship between Rio and Galwark kingdom.

Even so, in spite of it won't be a strange thing for some country to suddenly appear to make a pass on him, he needs to constantly mind his own actions in regard to Galwark kingdom.

"Yeah, I want to be closer to him for this reason. Geez, and yet I'm the first one who found the true worth of Haruto-sama....."

Liselotte is pouting her lips.

She's always restraining herself to send an invitation toward Rio up till now.

That was because the clear prospect of victory in dragging Rio to her ground is none.

Naturally if it's only an invitation since she knows by Rio's character in the fact that he will definitely take some distance from her if she's sending an invitation so many times over.

Thus, she goes with the strategy of keep decreasing their distance to make Rio let down his guard without sending an invitation.

And yet, the movement of the royalties and nobilities during this time is just a little—— Wrong, it's not amusing at all.

They'll just raise the possibility of Rio taking some distance from nobility and royalty for being fed up with them, since it'll make things turn ugly if the game that they were aiming for was snatched from the side.

"But, he refused the invitation from the king. Thus he won't easily serve under anyone isn't it? "

"I'm also including those factors but, the possibilities aren't zero"

From now on, Rio'll be involved with various royalties and nobilities regardless of his own will.

It's not strange if some amongst them even offer something that will satisfy Rio.

"Refusing the direct invitation from his majesty. The matter of him not moving for status or money is clear. Though his majesty is half-forcing his way by using his authority as some that he should do....."

"That's a poor move right. Today's matter is an exception. Since your majesty has to do that and even gave the title of honorary knight to Rio-sama"

## Part 3

Though there's several more in the list of what's necessary, thus he'll be dragged in by the country even if his deed of protecting Miharuru and the others alone is because he's aiming for a big one, there's a saying that Rio's achievement is also the Galwark kingdom's achievement.

And in the matter of giving the title of honorary knight to Rio means that Galwark kingdom participated in the case of protecting Miharuru and the others.

Though Takahisa is the first in the list for the right to claim for their protection as the family for Masato and Aki, there's no difference in the order between Takahisa and Satsuki in the matter of protection of Miharuru as he's just her friend.

Though the maximum priority should be Miharuru's own will, it'll become an insurance when the matter gets complicated.

"Well that aside, I felt that I should at least try to invite him sooner or later but I want to at least have some card in my hand"

Humans are creatures that were full of contradictions as long as they're making their move based on profit and loss.

Therefore there's a need for stimulating their emotion such as offering some sort of profit to change the other party.

But, the matter of Rio making his move without thinking about profit and loss is already widespread.

If for example another person is trying to invite Rio——

"It might be more interesting if you just going from the front and trying to seduce him with your sex appeal"

Aria suddenly muttered those words.

"S-Seducing him ? "

Liselotte's looking at Aria with a startled expression.

"Yeah, since almost all of those who made their move toward the men who

left their name in the annal of history is a woman"

She don't know whether Aria's joking or not since she said those words with a flat tone.

"Seducing him..... Is it"

Liselotte's letting out a voice which is filled with suspicion.

The certain strong point of a woman is to become a weapon to build a relationship with a man. [TL : You know, in adult way..... Snusnu by animesuki language]

Many woman also agree to that.

(Even so, it seems that no one is using seduction toward Haruto-sama. It seems that Cosette is boldly trying to approaching him but the result is unfavourable)

The chamberlain of Liselotte's not only for assisting her with Rikka firm work or prefectural governor work everyone of them is also a woman since they're basically doing maid work.

They're cream of the crops which is picked directly by Liselotte purely based on their natural disposition without caring about their status thus their ability and personality goes without saying.

After being employed, they'll be put under strict training one by one and learn the necessary knowledge to do their work.

To make matters worse, everyone of them is only consisting of women or girls who's in their prime age, they're basically consisting of various kind of beauties

Naturally there's a proper reason for why she's gathering not only the girl with beautiful face but also powerful.

Whether it's as a noble or as a merchant, majority of Liselotte's negotiation partner is a man.

If she can make the strong point of the girl standing out aside from their ability, it'll surely give her an advantage in negotiation——



## Part 4

In that case, she has no need for trickery if alluring words of the girl is enough to give her an advantage against her negotiation partner, that was Liselotte's business policy.

Though it's not to the degree that her negotiation partner will do sexual harassment beyond the threshold, when she found that there's some girls amongst her chamberlain who's being favored by her negotiation partner, that chamberlain will naturally be put in charge of those negotiations.

Though there's no clear evidence whether that step is helping the business or not, the business power of Rikka firm is unmatched by the others firms.

Therefore Liselotte is putting her biggest trust and pride to the chamberlains who's working under her wings and she can feel relieved to welcome Rio, her important guest.

Even if Rio's a youth who's in the peak of his puberty, there's no way he'll do bad things to the girls who are around his age.

Since he might even fall in love with one of her chamberlains——

Thus she held on to her faint expectation.

But, her faint expectation turned out to be just an expectation.

Well, she shouldn't be hoping so much for it since it was such a good bargain.

"Maybe Haruto-sama already has someone who's occupying his heart ? "

"He seems to be especially close to Cosette and Natalie amongst my chamberlain right. Since those girls are the ones who's often put in charge of Haruto-sama. but, the possibility of success by using seduction is too low"

"Well, that's just natural"

Liselotte's nodding to her words.

Because it's not like Liselotte's unable to grasp the sign in the case he has some interest in the girls amongst her chamberlains.

"In that case, this is Liselotte-sama's turn to come and seduce him"

Aria suddenly dropped such a atomic scale bombshell remark.

"M-Me ? "

Liselotte's unconsciously letting out a perplexed voice.

"Amongst all of us, aren't you the one who's actually closest to Haruto-sama"

"EH? EEEH ? Well that's right, even so..... The chamberlain side is....."

Liselotte is muttering those words with a weak tone while having a question mark on her face.

"Please have some confidence on yourself. You won't be able to make the best use of your own charm if you keep hesitating like that"

Aria's encouraging Liselotte who's showing a troubled expression.

"As far as I know, you're my best master. You're wise, have a noble heart, and have high pride. And you're the kind of woman who can stand side by side with a man"

"T-Thank you very much....."

Liselotte's giving his gratitude to Aria's praise with blushing cheeks.

"In spite of me saying to seduce him, I don't mean it in a way in which you're ensnaring him by using your womanly charm"

## Part 5

Aria's telling her that while waving her head in denial.

Not in any way she's telling Liselotte to use honey trap on Rio.

Aria was fully aware that Rio isn't the kind of man who can be defeated by such means.

"At times, there are some people who are really hard to be moved with such tactic. And he's definitely that kind of person"

Liselotte's silently listening to Aria's story.

"In fact, attracting him with your charm as a person without any kind of profit and gain is a better tactic. Let Haruto-sama get to know you as a person called Liselotte Kretia. Because you have the charm to make the people to automatically gather around you. It was the same case for me"

Aria's telling her that as-a-matter-of-fact.

Liselotte couldn't even barely notice it despite the long time they're spending together but, Aria's lips are definitely curved extremely slightly upward.

"My apologies for my admonition. But, in my humble idea, facing him in direct confrontation is even more important than unskillful deceit for an opponent like Haruto-sama"

Aria made a deep bow as she said that.

"..... That's right. It's as you say"

Liselotte's smiling wryly as she heaved a sigh.

"Thank you. It seems I was a bit too impatient. Thanks to you I managed to regain my composure"

Liselotte told her gratitude to Aria as she smiled calmly.

(It seems I have no choice but to face him with my sincerity by this point. I'll steadily deepen our personal relationship while keeping our contractual relationship)

It's as Aria just said, maybe to become even more closer to a person like Rio, going honestly without minding about things like profit and loss is the right choice.

Though Liselotte was always having contact with others as a noble or merchant, she could build a personal relationship for a long time.

(In fact I want to reward him with today's matter but, he definitely will reject it if I give it to him in a normal way.

Someday I'll tell Haruto-sama that I'm saved when I'm in a troubled situation)

She's wondering just how long it's been since she's facing someone in this way except for her parents and relatives.

As she thinks so,

(It might be since I was Rikka)

Liselotte's shutting her eyes as she laid on top of the bed while a nostalgic smile is peeking on her face.



On the other side, Rio was walking alone in the passage of the royal castle after his meeting with Liselotte.

(Maybe Satsuki-san went to Miharuru and the others' place.)

## Part 6

Rio's step is becoming even more slow as he thinks about that chance.

The place in which Miharuru and the others are staying at was the room in which Takahisa is staying at.

They might've a pleasant talk even as he's walking toward that place now.

He wants to go to Miharuru's place too.

That moment, he was driven by impulse to go to the room in which Miharuru is and confessing everything.

But, after taking a deep breath in order to calm down the blood that is rushing toward his head, Rio then headed toward the room in which he's assigned to.

He definitely has something that he wants to tell Miharuru and the others but, there's a lot of things that he should also tell them along with it.

But, if he's confessing the truth just as it is to Miharuru and the others by disregarding TPO, he can easily imagine that it'll only make Miharuru and the others confused.

Thus, he can't be impatient.

(I'll tell them about the future plan tomorrow. And I can't make use of tonight. Till that time.....)

What and how he should tell them about this matter.

Rio already decided after much consideration.

Naturally, he'll personally tell Miharuru about it.

But, properly conveying things to her is a bit difficult.

Thus, Rio felt that he needs to write a letter.

To Aki and Miharuru, who's deeply influencing his previous life, and naturally toward Masato too.

He'll give it to them tonight.

As for his confession.

He'll choose the timing when it was only the two of them.

He'll make it if there's none.

Maybe she'll hate him if he tells her the truth.

Because what he did was an extremely egoistical deed.

Even so, he decided on moving forward.

He won't hold back now.

(Because I have always been running away from her up till now.....)

He won't be any different from when he was Amakawa Haruto unless he confesses his love for Miharu.

After doing some self-reflection, Rio's quickened his pace as his thought is composing what he should write in his letter.



Galwark kingdom is the country which held the tenacious spirit to not yielding to terrorism.

In spite of the zero damage by the group of burglars last night, it might become a cue to hold an open meeting, thus they decided to hold the third day of the evening party which will also become the last day.

Many soldiers have been arranged to the potential place in which the people will come and fro, they're spreading an extremely tight defense network on the vicinities of the windows, around the exit and the entrance which become the route for the burglar last night.

Even if the burglars are forcing their way to break through, it's absolutely impossible for them to even reach the venue.

There's not that much necessary to introduce the participants since tonight is the last day of evening party and the ceremony of raising the curtain become even more simple compared to the previous two nights.

They decided to announce two important matters instead.

"Our Galwark kingdom has proceeded with behind the door negotiation to form an alliance with our neighbor, the Saint Stellar kingdom. With the first princess Lilyana, their ambassador"

The venue fell into silence the moment they hear Francois' words.

But, it's followed by great noise right in the next moment.

It seems that was the first time for every royalty and the noble in the venue to hear that.

Though Saint Stellar kingdom is a leading power in the eastern part of Strahl region, lately they're inclined to seclude themselves from having diplomatic relationship with other countries.

Since that country is forming a defense alliance with the neighbor who's also major power, the Galwark kingdom, even the royalties and the nobilities who aren't showing keen interest in politics are greatly shaken by this announcement.

## Part 7

"SILENT ! "

The venue fell into silent with the voice of the male MC.

After confirming their silence,

"The progress is in favorable direction as of now. Thus we decided to take this occasion to announcing about this matter to the people of our neighbouring country too. If everything is going smoothly, this matter might be officially announced soon enough"

Francois smoothly added another statement.

Thereafter, the noise descended upon the venue for the second time.

It doesn't mean that the atmosphere that is drifting along inside the hall is from anxiety, it gave more feeling of something they're hoping for in spite of being bewildered by such good news.

The royalties and the nobilities who're in the venue start to show a hint of excitement and then the clapping hands that is the sign as if they're expecting the forming of new alliance is reverberating inside of the venue.

"Well then, following that, let's move to the ceremony of opening the curtain. Next is the investiture of the honorary knight. The person who will become the new knight is the one who made the greatest contribution in repelling the burglars from last night, Lord Haruto. He received the alias "Black Knight" directly from your majesty the king"

The MC is explaining the situation in a clear voice and then the nobilities in the venue are starting to look at the stage with curious expressions.

"It seems the roundup of the burglars last night is a splendid one huh"

"Well he was like taking down six burglars who were as strong as regular knights by himself"

"That's..... Amazing. I'm really regretting the fact that I couldn't see that with my own eyes"



The tale of Rio's action last night is spread around inside the venue.

"LET'S WELCOME THE BLACK KNIGHT, LORD HARUTO ! "

"HA ! "

Rio's replying quickly as he moves toward the edge of the stage on which Francois is standing at.

Coiled around Rio body is the ceremonial attire of the black knight with simple white patterns engraved on it.

It was something lent to him to receive his alias, the black knight.

In spite of nothing more than makeshift attire, Francois decided to grant him with official attire of black knight after the evening party.

Miharu and the others were looking at the back of Rio from behind the door of the stage.

Though the attendance of Miharu and the others in evening party was decided arbitrarily, they eventually decided on attending the evening party as a form of gratitude toward Francois who let them to go into the royal castle.

The three of Satsuki, Takahisa and Lilyana are tightly protecting the three of Miharu, Aki and Masato right at their side.

And then, it's been decided that they'll make a simple introduction for Miharu and the others after performing the investiture.

In that case, Francois cautioned the nobilities and the royalties from refraining themselves from greeting Miharu and the others since they're unaware of the manners of evening party.

"Haruto-anchan is so cool....."

Masato was looking at Rio who's receiving the investiture ceremony with sparkling eyes.

"Please say that in front of Haruto-kun later, okay. He definitely will be delighted"

## Part 8

Satsuki's telling Masato with a impish smile on her face.

"Yeah, definitely ! "

Masato nodded vigorously.

"His face of that time is something worth to see right. I want to save that picture of him if only there's some battery left in my smartphone but....."

"Sa-Satsuki-san"

Miharu's showing a troubled expression to Satsuki who's muttering those words.

At the same time they're standing a little far from her.

"B-Black knight..... Goddamnit ! I'll be ashamed to die if I was the one who received such embarrassing title but that title sounds cool"

Hiroaki was looking at Rio with complicated expression while grumbling like that.

"What are you talking about, Hiroaki-sama ? "

Flora's asking with question mark floating on her face.

"Ah, it's nothing. That guy alias is a bit too..... I am even wondering whether I should be jealous or pitying him"

Hiroaki's speaking with a troubled tone.

"Haa....."

Flora was tilting her head in confusion.

"By the way, those people over there who's the friend of the heroes are also the people who live in the same world as Hiroaki-sama right ? "

"N? Ah, that's right. Brother and sister aside, the rest might be their buddy in the high school. CEH, damn riajuu\*" [TL\* : Fulfilled person, in short someone like me]

He's taking a look at the change of topic which is offered by Flora and then speaking in a slightly annoyed tone.

"Uhm, is there some kind of bad news even for Hiroaki-sama ? "

"Ha~h ? Not a chance. It has nothing to do with me as I'm not even their acquaintance"

Hiroaki's replying with a fed-up expression as if not interesting at all.

"What's the matter Flora. Do you want to greet them ? "

Hiroaki asked while looking at Flora with a bored face.

"Ah, no, it's just that. I'm just thinking of how the people of Hiroaki-sama's world is spending their life....."

Flora's telling her feelings while observing Hiroaki's reaction.

## Part 9

"It's nothing special at all. It is sort of doing a poor make-believe-friend game. The relationship is only on the surface at most. I'm sure it's a muddy situation for that male and female hero too"

Hiroaki's speaking with a dampened voice.

"Is that so....."

Flora's muttering those words while looking at the lively conversation of Satsuki and the others.

But, Flora who noticed a completely different atmosphere from the one that described by Hiroaki didn't say anything anymore.

In the meantime, Rio's achievement in repelling the burglars and protecting the friends of the heroes is greatly admired, the birth of the new honorary knight is celebrated grandiously.

# Chapter 108: Because of You

## Part 1

After the opening ceremony ended, the last evening party finally began.

"Oh~, so this is the Black Knight?"

"Are you enjoying yourself, Lord Haruto?"

"I would love to introduce my daughter to Lord Haruto."

As soon as Rio descended from the stage, he was greeted by an onslaught of people.

They all wanted to build a good relationship with the newly-appointed honorary knight who was hailed as a hero.

He didn't know what they really thought about him, but everyone greeted him amicably.

Some went as far as making marriage offers.

The nobles who were trying to get intimate with him by calling him such things as "Lord Haruto" or "Black Knight" slowly shaved away at Rio's spirit. Being called Black Knight was especially grating.

By having the "honorary" title attached to his name, Rio instantly became recognized as a noble even though he didn't serve a country.

As a result, nobles left and right made their move on him without any regard to their own.

*At this rate I won't even get a chance to breathe.*

Behind the insincere smile, Rio was growing more frustrated that he had no room to move freely.

He let his eyes wander between greetings, searching for someone in the crowd.

Rio remembered that morning when he requested permission for Miharuru and the kids to enter the castle, Francois wanted them to attend.

However, it was only after the party started that they would participate.

Rio felt like it was a good idea to talk when they got some time.

Fortunately, thanks to Satsuki and Takahisa, they weren't too nervous.

*Actually I'd really like to go join them, but...*

He turned his attention back to the woman at his side, as well as the many nobles blocking off any escape route.

The woman beside him tonight was not Liselotte.

By order of King Francois Galwark, he assigned his beloved daughter Charlotte Galwark to be his partner.

Charlotte was one of the royalties Rio protected the night before.

As one would expect, ignoring the orders of the king is impossible, so Rio hurriedly attended the party with her.

"Haruto-sama, Haruto-sama."

And Charlotte, who had been keeping a friendly smile throughout all of this, called Rio while pulling his arm.

Though it may have also had something to do with her being younger than him, it seemed like she was just a pampered child from the start. She was like this with her older brother, Michael, and that trait of hers was no more subdued now towards Rio.

"Haruto-sama."

"Yes? What is it?"

"Are you not parched after speaking so much?"

Maybe because she noticed that Rio kept talking without pause, Charlotte brought it up when he finally caught his breath.

"How impolite of me. Let's get a drink from the waiters."

"Fufu, allow me."

Charlotte was probably thirsty, too.

Rio absentmindedly took a step with that in mind, but Charlotte was already

ahead of him.

## **Part 2**

"Here you go."

She came back with a cute stride that reminded him of a small animal, handing him a silver glass filled with fruit liquor.

"Thank you very much."

"Let's make a toast, Haruto-sama."

"Yes. Cheers."

"Cheers."

The two smiled as they made eye contact, and lightly raised their glasses.

And with that, they shared a drink.

"Fufu. It's delicious, but somehow the alcohol seems quite strong."

Charlotte made a comment with an impish smile on her face, elegantly placing her hand on her cheek.

"There's no need to force yourself. Please let me know if you feel as though something is wrong."

"Thank you very much, but I should be fine with this much."

As they idled through their conversation, Rio noticed a group of six approaching them. A woman with black hair tinged brown greeted them when they were within earshot.

"Haruto-kun."

The one who called first was Satsuki.

Following behind her were Liliana, Takahisa, Masato, Aki and Miharuru, all in formal dress.

Takahisa grinned awkwardly when his eyes met Rio's, while Liliana nodded along with her usual kind smile.

On the other hand, Masato, Aki and Miharuru were all slightly embarrassed wearing fanciful clothes they weren't used to.

"Everyone... You all look great."

Rio briefly lost his breath, but managed to respond with a smile.

The cause of that was one girl in the group, Ayase Miharuru.

He was able to see her clearly from afar, but he unwittingly found himself fascinated up close.

She wore a pale pink dress that gave off the air of a fairy, and her long black hair was braided to the right of her neck, lending her an overall neat and tidy atmosphere.

Rio had seen and met more undisputedly beautiful noble girls than he could count in the last three days, but Miharuru's gleaming brilliance made all the others look dull by comparison.

He stiffened up a little at the sight, and Charlotte was the first to pick up on it, watching him from the side.

But she didn't mention it, quickly turning to Miharuru and the others.

### **Part 3**

"It's a pleasure to meet all of you. I am the second princess of the Galwark Kingdom, Charlotte Galwark."

Charlotte pinched the hem of her dress and bowed to the others as she introduced herself. When she raised her head, she looked to Miharuru with a smile on her face.

"Yes, my name is Miharuru Ayase. The pleasure's all mine."

It was a little rough, but Miharuru answered politely, using her given name first to follow this world's customs.

"Char-chan, I think you already know about Takahisa-kun and Liliana-sama, but these three are my friends. Miharuru-chan's introduced herself, but the little girl is Aki-chan, and this boy is Masato-kun. They're Takahisa-kun's siblings."

Satsuki took over for Aki and Masato, who fell behind Miharuru.

"It's nice to meet you."

Charlotte greeted the younger siblings with the same smile as always.



"N-Nice to meet you."

Aki and Masato bowed nervously when they responded.

Maybe it was her sophisticated demeanor befitting her royal status, or simply because they were caught up in her cute appearance.

"I think Aki-chan is about the same age as Char-chan. Masato-kun is a year younger. And Miharu-chan's a year under me, about Haruto-kun's age."

After Satsuki's short overview, Charlotte looked to the three of them.

"Miharu-sama, Aki-sama and Masato-sama, correct? I'll certainly remember that. Please take care of me in the future."

"Yes, of course."

Aki and Masato replied together to Charlotte's innocent smile. And while rest of the group watched their exchange, as if suddenly remembering something, Satsuki spoke up.

"All that aside, it seems the *"Black Knight"*-sama is quite popular right now. You've had a crowd around you ever since the party started."

A mischievous expression was painted all over Satsuki's face, like she was laughing at a good joke. Rio's face cramped when he saw it.

"... It's not like I'm that popular. They were probably drawn in by Princess Charlotte's beauty."

But he managed to recover, answering her with his best business smile.

Amazed by Rio's ability to follow through, Satsuki's round eyes narrowed.

#### **Part 4**

"Well, aren't you the smooth talker."

Hearing his praise, Charlotte didn't hide her delight.

"Haruto-anchan got such a cool title like Black Knight! I'm so jealous!"

And Masato cheerfully butt in with sparkles in his eyes.

"A-ah... Thank you."

Masato's young innocence only drove the knife deeper.

And Satsuki, who could no longer completely suppress the urge to laugh, began chuckling under her breath.

"It's truly a wonderful title, Haruto-sama."

Charlotte was quick to join in Masato's momentum, as well.

The high schoolers from Japan aside, Charlotte was a pure girl from this world. She didn't feel even the tiniest disturbance in saying such an embarrassing name.

It was a completely genuine compliment, just like Masato's.

Maybe it wouldn't have bothered him as much if Satsuki wasn't grinning like an idiot while watching him sit there obediently taking their praise.

"... Thank you very much."

Rio expressed his gratitude, doing the best he could to hide his shame.

Charlotte's father is the one who bestowed the alias of the Black Knight on him.

He couldn't and didn't want to say the horrible things he was thinking about that alias in front of her.

"Anyway, Haruto-kun, aren't you getting really close with Char-chan?"

Picking just the right moment, Satsuki changed the topic, and Charlotte smiled from ear to ear hearing it.

"That's true. Haruto-sama is a kind and marvelous man. It feels like I'm getting a new older brother."

She leaned coquettishly into Rio's arm as she spoke.

The difference in their status ceased to matter to the crowd. They all stared in amazement, focusing intently on the conversation between Charlotte and Satsuki.

"... Heh, doesn't that make you happy, Haruto-kun? You get such a cute little sister."

Satsuki took several seconds to reply, a slightly colder tone in her voice.

She was smiling just like usual. Perhaps it was his imagination, but Rio could feel a sort of pressure bearing down on him.

"That's just a joke. I'm still a far cry from Michael-sama."

Rio courageously shook his head in denial despite the chills running down his spine.

"Fufu, Haruto-sama has a different kind of charm compared to Onii-sama."

Charlotte happily fueled the fire, clinging closer to Rio's arm with every second.

Satsuki squinted her eyes, and even Miharuru right next to her had her full attention on the pair.

## **Part 5**

*What's with this atmosphere?*

Rio didn't understand exactly why, but the strange air gathering around him was palpable.

What he did understand was that if Charlotte kept sticking to him the way she was, things were only going to get worse for him.

Nevertheless, seeing that she was the king's daughter, he couldn't just shake her off by force.

"Fu~, Haruto-kun's charm, is it? I wonder what you're referring to."

"That's right. He gives off this reliable air that makes me feel at ease just staying by his side."

"I see... I suppose I can understand that."

Satsuki reluctantly agreed with Charlotte's remark, Miharuru quietly nodding herself.

The others from Japan, however, were a little perplexed.

Satsuki was acting her age—showing a wealth of emotion befitting a teenage girl. This was rare.

She was practically faultless in the eyes of her fellow students, Takahisa

included.

Branded an honor student by those around her, she easily took the position of student council president, and gave off a hard-to-approach image in the process.

Naturally she'd respond if someone spoke to her, but, maybe because she wasn't very open about herself or drew a line separating her from others, Satsuki established herself as a calm and composed person without much emotion.

That Satsuki lived up to the expectations of her surroundings, and showed little of herself even to those close to her, but the Satsuki right now seemed like a completely different person, her feelings clear as day on her face.

"You think so, too?"

Charlotte brought her face so close to Rio's arm it looked like she was about to rub her cheeks on it.

The intensity of Satsuki's glare jumped another level, and in spite of her unconcerned look Miharū's gaze was firmly locked on Charlotte's attachment to Rio.

Alarm bells went off in Rio's head, screaming at him to get away as fast as possible, but Charlotte stuck to him like glue to keep him in place.

Things were going from bad to worse.

Fearing the growing danger behind his cool facade, Rio desperately searched for anything that could be used as an excuse to free himself from the situation.

Then he discovered the empty glass clutched tightly in Charlotte's hand.

"Charlotte-sama, may I borrow your glass?"

"Yes. Whatever for?"

Though slightly puzzled, Charlotte obeyed his request.

"It may be empty, but what's left would stain your lovely dress if it were to spill. I'll go return it."

Rio immediately took the opportunity to casually gain some distance between

himself and Charlotte.

"Oh my, as expected of a gentleman. How tactful of you, Haruto-kun."

Just when it seemed he got away, Satsuki spoke again with some admiration. Incomprehensibly to Rio, the crushing atmosphere from before vanished in an instant.

And as if disappointed, Charlotte flashed a hint of boredom on her face when no one was looking.

"Not at all. It would be a problem if anything happened, that's all."

Slipping away with a wry smile, Rio left to a nearby table to return the glasses he and Charlotte drank from. When he did, he heaved a sigh of relief at being released from that incredible pressure.

## **Part 6**

*Alright, I guess I'll go back now.*

Rio returned to the others with all the enthusiasm of a soldier marching into a warzone.

"Are you enjoying the party, Miharu-san?"

He greeted Miharu first when he made it close.

A bystander to the conversation, Miharu was trembling when she turned to Rio, his face looking like he was silently asking what was wrong.

Miharu smiled, slightly embarrassed.

"Um, somehow, but I'm a little nervous."

She answered him while twirling the tip of her braid, and they snuck off a little ways to separate from the group.

Takahisa watched them carefully, but he didn't call out to her.

"I'm glad. I was concerned that you'd be forcing yourself to participate, but it seems my worries were unfounded."

"Yes. Liliana-sama says this will be beneficial in the long run, since we can express our gratitude to the king if we attended tonight."

"I see..."

Looking pensive about it, Rio nodded, convinced.

"It looks like Masato-kun and Aki-chan are enjoying themselves, too."

Saying so, Rio was looking at the two in question. They were chatting with the people around them, smiling and laughing all the while.

"They were excited when they heard we'd be attending. Although, they were a bit anxious right before we came in."

Miharu chuckled as she spoke.

"That's very like them, huh?"

After a while, Rio noticed that he was enjoying his conversation with Miharu, and an offhanded thought slipped from his tongue.

"It feels like it's been a while since we've been able to chat like this, just the two of us."

In fact, even though they were living under the same roof they didn't get many chances to be alone.

The last time was maybe when they made their last meal before heading to the capital.

## **Part 7**

"That's right... To be honest, I got kind of nervous when you spoke to me, Haruto-san."

There was a bashful look on Miharu's face when she answered.

"Is that so?"

"We haven't met for a while, so something about Haruto-san here in the castle feels different than usual. You're more refined and sophisticated... and although you're right next to me, you feel so out of reach."

Seeing the Rio holding conversations with royalty and nobility without a hint of anxiety, it was as if she wasn't looking at the Rio she was used to, but another person entirely.

"I'm really not that sort of existence."

Rio shook his head in denial, seemingly troubled by her impression of him.

It could have just been her brain playing tricks on her, but she noticed something faint in his amber eyes.

She didn't understand it.

"Yes. The Haruto-san speaking this way is the one I'm familiar with."

Miharu slowly nodded, carefully looking into Rio's eyes.

It could be called a matter of course that Rio was looking back, standing so close.

For a few seconds, the two stared at each other in silence.

"—..."

And the next moment, Miharu averted her gaze, looking down with a blush in her cheeks.

When she turned her eyes up again, twirling the tip of her braid around her finger, Rio was still right there watching her.

"... Miharu-san."

Then he called to her in a lowered tone.

"Y-Yes? What's the matter?"

Miharu stumbled over her words when she answered.

The sincerity in Rio's voice was piercing right through her.

She could hear her heart beating faster.

*What... What's wrong with me...?*

What kind of feeling this was—

She couldn't understand it.

But she was sure, just looking at Rio made her more and more nervous.

"Will you come with me out onto the balcony? I need to speak with you alone."

Rio made his proposal with a troubled expression, but a resolute voice.

The timing was off from what he had hoped for, but he thought this would be the best chance he'd get to be alone with Miharu.

## Part 8

*I should just stop making excuses to run from her.*

Sneaking away definitely wasn't good.

But he was short on time. He didn't know whether he'd get this kind of opportunity again if he didn't take it now.

He had no intention of letting a chance to confess his feelings go by, and if this one slipped past him he'd start looking for the next.

"Is that alright? This is important."

"Ah... I have something I wish to tell Haruto-san, too."

Miharu nodded to confirm.

"It's decided then.... Masato."

Rio got Masato's attention from behind.

"Hm? What's up, Haruto-anchan?"

Masato turned around and approached the two.

"I'm going to leave for a little while with Miharu-san. Since it'll be a bit before we come back, will you please tell anyone who notices our disappearance not to worry about us? It'll be awkward if someone suddenly interrupts our conversation."

Fortunately, Rio's presence had drifted away from everyone's consciousness as they engaged in their lively chatter.

They could easily slip out now, when no one paid them any mind.

And on the off-chance that someone thought to go after them, he didn't tell Masato about where they were going.

"Yeah. Leave it to me."

Masato replied immediately.



"Thank you. Well then, shall we go?"

Thus, Rio and Miharu left in secret.

However, two girls followed them from a distance, determined not to let them off so easily.

One was watching on with a pleased smile, though the other kept to an expression that hid her thoughts.

Rio and Miharu arrived at a balcony that was left open for guests to take a break, and soldiers were arranged at the entrance to stand guard.

But it seemed no one had any inclinations to come near this place, since the evening parties were for the purpose of making connections.

The commotion throughout the hall sounded so lonely, and even the extravagance of the event itself felt so far away.

The refreshing night air blowing over the balcony cooled them down from the heat of the party.

They walked to the back, standing side by side by the balustrade.

It was a quiet place, good for calming down and clearing the mind.

"Uwaa~, the sky is so beautiful. It feels like my soul could just fly away..."

Miharu muttered in astonishment, a sea of stars filling the night sky.

"It's as if you can reach the moon and star just by stretching your arm."

Rio voiced his own impression as he looked up into the night.

"Fufu, that's very poetic."

Though briefly perplexed by his words, Miharu smiled gently when she turned to Rio.

Then their eyes met. Rio was looking back.

And under the moonlight, seeing each other's faces so clearly embarrassed her.

"That dress suits you well, Miharu-san. You're very beautiful."

Rio's honest thoughts, simple as they were, resounded deep in Miharu's

heart.

"..... Huh—?"

Miharu's face flushed.

Her heart started pounding.

Who was he saying it for? Were those words truly for her? What was he after, saying such a thing?

Her head was spinning.

Nobody was here except for Rio and herself.

That alone was enough that there was no doubt he meant those words for her, but—

The fact he said "Miharu-san" was—

"T-Thank you very much...?"

She lowered her eyes, voice shaking as she gave her gratitude.

Her face was as red as a tomato.

"Miharu-san."

Rio smiled and gingerly touched her hand.

"Y-Yes?"

She answered timidly as she looked back up to meet him.

When she did, Rio's face was right in front of her.

He took a step toward her.

It was only one step—

But the gap it closed between them felt so much wider.

Rio's gaze was fixed on Miharu's eyes and saw right through to her core.

## **Part 10**

"....."

A silence lingered for a short while, then Miharu's brain registered the sight of

Rio's lips moving.

The words that came from his mouth—

"Miharu-san, I love you."

It was a confession.

"I love you so much."

He repeated it, and she began quivering in shock.

Her mind went blank.

Her heart was threatening to burst from her chest.

Miharu felt a sudden warmth.

Rio's hand was large, yet barely stiff, and from it his warmth had enveloped her entire body as if a fire had been kindled deep inside.

His breath brushed against her skin.

She was overwhelmed, but couldn't bring herself to turn away.

Miharu could see herself shaking, reflected in Rio's eyes.

But he broke through her anxiety.

"I love you, Ayase Miharu-san."

Rio repeated his simple confession once more.

He didn't leave the slightest opening for a misunderstanding.

With just a few words, Rio made to ensure his feelings reached her.

"A... Au..."

Miharu was at a loss for words.

She experienced several confessions before, but this was perhaps the first time one had ever shaken her so greatly.

No.

It happened once before.

That time she made a promise with Amakawa Haruto, when she was seven

years old.

"I want to always stay by your side, Miharu-san."

Rio took her hands in his, and showed no signs of letting go.

## **Part 11**

Miharu wasn't very good with boys, especially not touching them.

She was a beautiful girl from a young age, but was teased ever since she'd separated from Haruto.

The reason was simple enough.

Haruto, who played the role of breakwater for her, had to transfer schools.

The boys liked Miharu.

They were children, though. They took the typical route of being mean to the girl they liked.

It didn't grow into anything particularly vicious, but due to her own personality Miharu quietly endured every day.

She made it through her days dreaming about the promise and memories she made with Haruto.

After entering middle school, boys started taking different paths to getting near her, but that wouldn't easily erase the fear and isolation Miharu felt.

So she kept a comfortably large distance from the opposite sex.

Although she didn't move away so blatantly whenever a boy tried to approach her, she tried to get away as casually as possible.

She even pushed Takahisa when he suddenly embraced her before. Maybe it was that she had an aversion to any boy besides Haruto.

So why was she unable to pull herself away from Rio's grasp?

She didn't feel any apprehension at his touch. Rather, Miharu was bewildered at how willingly she was letting him stay so close.

"Whether I'm dreaming, awake or reborn, I love you. I will always love you."

One by one, Rio spoke his words slowly and firmly.

"But what I want to tell Miharusan—. This is something I need you to hear."

Miharu's chest tightened at his resolve, and she found herself squeezing his hand in return.

Rio's face was close enough that if either of them moved just a little more their lips would touch.

A smile painted itself on Rio's face.

It was a gentle smile, but it was a shy smile filled with both fear and relief. And yet, for some reason Miharu felt a deep sense of nostalgia from it.

They simply stared at each other in silence for a few moments.

"Maybe you've already forgotten, but that day, nine years ago for you—"

"Miharu-oneechan? Are you here?"

The voice of a young girl echoed over the balcony.

It was Aki's voice, and she sounded a little impatient.

She was leading a nervous Takahisa by the hand as they made it out to find them.

"Miharu... oneechan?"

Aki called Miharu's name and was soon dumbfounded.

She found the two mere inches away from each other, and Miharu holding tight to Rio's hands.

They looked just like lovers.

"Um..."

Hesitating to say anything about their display, she turned around as if recalling the person she pulled along.

Behind her stood Takahisa, the expression on his face making it obvious that he was enduring a whirlwind of emotions inside.

## Part 12

"Ah, um... This is..."

Miharu released her grip and retreated once she realized that she was the one holding onto Rio. Her body had moved on its own in the exchange.

When the atmosphere shattered and she returned to her senses, she was too embarrassed to form a coherent sentence.

"What's the matter? You seem to be in a hurry."

But composed as ever, Rio spoke up with his normal, calm voice.

"Um, we were looking for you since Masato said you went off somewhere..."

Aki replied awkwardly.

"I did say we'd be back right away. Did Masato forget to say that?"

Rio smiled wryly, guessing it couldn't be helped.

"Ah, no, he mentioned it, but..."

"It's just with everything that happened yesterday and all. My concern got the better of me."

Takahisa added his own explanation with a smile to support Aki, but his voice was slightly shaking.

"T-That's right. We were worried."

Though surprised at Takahisa's unexpected reaction, Aki nodded along.

"I'm sorry. I brought her out for a while. I wanted to have a discussion with Miharu-san."

"Dis...cussion?"

Aki peered at Rio through his straightforward apology.

"Yeah. A little about what'll happen after this. It's something I needed to say to Miharu-san no matter what.

Actually, there are things I have to tell everyone else as well, but this is something I couldn't say to just anyone."

Rio answered with a bitter smile.

"I... see."

Aki knew better than to push any further, so she stopped there.

"Miharu-san. There's something I want you to have. This might be shameless of me to ask, but will you hear the rest of what I have to say later?"

Rio asked in a hushed tone so only Miharu would hear. She was perplexed for a second, but voiced her acceptance in kind.

### **Part 13**

"Haruto-sama, do you know how worried I was?"

Soon, from behind Aki and Takahisa came Charlotte at a brisk pace, calling out to her partner with her bottomlessly bright voice and taking his hand the moment she reached his side.

"My deepest apologies. I wanted to have a little discussion with Miharu-san. We were supposed to be back shortly, but..."

"It's okay. To make up for it, please come dance with me."

Charlotte expressed her innocent wish with a delightful smile.

Rio's eyes met Miharu's when he looked away, and she smiled to him as well, albeit more unsettled.

"... As you wish."

He resisted his urge to heave a sigh, and Rio resigned himself to his fate. As soon as he did, Charlotte promptly led him back to the event hall, wrapped around his arm.

Nearly unable to get away for even a moment, the third evening party came to a peaceful close.

# Chapter 109: So Close Yet, So Far

## Part 1

Though it was the final day of the evening party, there's a manner for the evening party held by nobilities or royalties in not just the way to enter but also the way to exit.

Basically the one who leaves first is the important foreign guests which will then be followed by the royalties and the nobilities of the one who held the party starting from the one with the higher position first.

Takahisa and Lilyana, Flora and Hiroaki who belong to the big countries and then Miharuru and the others also leave along with them since they're entering along with Takahisa and Lilyana.

Basically when the VIP of a foreign country leave the venue, the next one to leave is one with a high social position in their home country.

Charlotte, the royalty and then Satsuki, the hero, from the fact that he's coming along with them as Charlotte's partner, he has to leave along with them.

The manager of the girl already waiting for them when they left the venue and hurriedly coming toward Rio and the two girls.

They're supposed to go back to their own room after leaving the venue but, they're still tagging along even when they're about to reach the point where they have to separate their ways.

The noise that they can hear coming from the venue is gradually becoming smaller and then, the three of them stopped at the place where they have to go to separate ways.

"My appreciation for today. Haruto-sama, Satsuki-sama"

Charlotte said those words with her characteristic bright voice as she looks at Satsuki and Rio.



"Yeah, thank you Sharl-chan. As I thought it made me tired when there's so many people"

Satsuki's replying appropriately while heaving a sigh.

"Thank you very much for such a wonderful moment. Your highness princess Charlotte"

Rio's nodding toward Charlotte.

Satsuki on his side is glancing at him too.

"Say, Haruto-ku——"

"If you may, will you have a little discussion with me after this, Haruto-sama ? "

When Satsuki looks like that she's about to say something, Charlotte already made the first move.

Satsuki's slightly dazed after losing the initiation from Charlotte.

"..... Yes, I can if Charlotte-sama is inviting me for a short discussion"

Rio's replying with a calm voice.

Seeing that the other party is a royalty, he thinks that he has no right to reject her invitation unless he already have prior arrangements.

Satsuki's eyebrows twitched when she's looking at their conversation right by their side.

"I'm glad then. I still want to talk with you for a while longer. Thus, the place will be my own room"

Rio and Satsuki's startled in hearing Charlotte's reply.

In a sense, it's currently a bit too late for a man to visit a woman's room.

In the first place, for a man to go to a princess's room by himself is already a taboo isn't it?.

Rio and Satsuki both have such common sense.

But, maybe because she's aware of their worry.

"Well, shall we go then, Haruto-sama"

## Part 2

Saying so, Charlotte intimately took Rio's hand.

"Since it seems that you're already worn out from the evening party, please take a good rest Satsuki-sama. Well, we'll excuse ourself then"

After showing off her sweet smiling face, Charlotte then turned around as she pulled Rio's arm.

Satsuki was looking at the series of events with a dumbfounded face but,

"WHA ! W-W-WAIT AMINUTE ! "

She quickly called to Rio and Charlotte.

Therupon, Charlotte is stopping her her feet as if she already expected Satsuki to stop them from the very beginning.

"Yes, what's the matter ? "

A grin appeared on Charlotte's face.

"F-For a girl to invite a man to their own room at this kind of time is, isn't something admirable isn't it. Uhm"

It's a rare thing for the normally smart Satsuki to stutter with her words.

"Fufufu, it's okay. Because Haruto-sama is a real gentleman like my older brother"

Charlotte's replying while pulling Rio's arm.

Thereupon, Satsuki's eyebrows is twitching in hearing her words.

"Y-YOU CAN'T. Haruto-kun might lost his self-restraint if I leave him alone with a cute girl. As your senior in terms of age, illicit sexual relationship isn't something that I can just let pass"

Satsuki's declaring that with a clear tone.

"Illicit sexual..... Relationship ? But I want to have a conversation with Haruto-sama....."

Charlotte tilted her head with a troubled face.

"I-It's not like you can't do that by all means. But, being just the two of you alone at this kind of time might not be a good thing for the two of you. Right, Haruto-kun. You'll think so if you're her oniichan right ? "[TL : What about her case the night before yesterday???]

Satsuki's telling her reason to Charlotte and then quickly looked at Rio.

Deep inside, He's agreeing with what she said but, for some reason Rio felt an earth-shattering pressure emanating from Satsuki.

"Ye-Yeah. That's right. As expected, being alone with just your highness princess Charlotte is a bit..... Shall we change our place and go along with other people....."

Rio's replying while feeling a cold chill run along his spine.

"I see. In that case, will you come with us too, Satsuki-sama ? "

Charlotte nonchalantly gave such a suggestion.

"U-Uhn. Well if you say so, it can't be helped then. I'll come along" [TL : Is this the birth of "Chorotsuki"?]

## Part 3

Satsuki's nodding in agreement to Charlotte's invitation.

Though Satsuki marveled on why she feel this sense of relieve in her heart while being relieved inside herself, She decided to push that thought to the corner of her mind.

After that, they decided to meet in Charlotte room after changing their clothes so, Satsuki's going back to her own room to change her dress while Rio is also going back to his own room.

Rio himself who wore the knight attire for ease movement itself aside, Satsuki just can't feel relaxed while she's still wearing those dresses that limits your movement.

And then after they changed their own respective clothes, they decided to hold the after party of the evening party in Charlotte's room.



Around that time, Miharuru and the others who finished changing their clothes already returned to their own room.

Since it seems that Lilyana also has something to discuss with Francois after this, Takahisa's escorting her till the king's office.

On the other hand, maybe because it's their first experience in attending the evening party, Aki and Masato's attacked by drowsiness as if their tense string finally snapped.

"Good night, neechan and the other too"

Masato's heading toward the bedroom that was assigned to him while letting out a big yawn with sleepy eyes.

It made one to wonder just how many bedroom in the room in which Takahisa and the others are living in when excluding the living room.

"Good night"

Miharuru and Aki replied to Masato. And then, when Masato's entering his

bedroom,

"Shall we go to sleep too ? "

Aki asked Miharu.

"Uhn. I want to wait for a while longer. I'm not that sleepy yet"

"Are you waiting for oniichan to go back ? "

"U-Uhn. You just said that you're sleepy right, Aki-chan. You shouldn't wait for me and go to sleep right away you know"

Miharu's replying with a clumsy smile.

In that moment, a pensive look's appearing on Aki's face as if she suddenly hit upon a good idea,

"Is it ? Then I'll go first....."

She said so with a blooming smile on her face.

"Yeah. Good night"

"Good night. Please give my regard to oniichan"

Aki's smiling delightfully as she entered her bedroom without a hitch.

And then, Miharu heaved a sigh of relief when she's the only one left in the living room.

She's sitting on the chair in the middle of living room as if waiting for someone to come to visit.

1 second to 10 seconds, and then 1 minute is passing by as she keep waiting.

Thereupon, Miharu's suddenly standing up as she started to walking back and forth in the room with a restless expression.

## Part 4

She keeps recalling the prior event in during the evening party as she keeps walking around restlessly inside of the room.

The location of that event is on a certain quiet balcony in the castle right under the starry skies and blessed by the moonlight.

(I, just received a love confession right. Moreover it's from Haruto-san.....)

At that time, Rio's stared at Miharu with a earnest look in his eyes.

——I love you, Ayase Miharu-san.

He might be saying "I love you" so many times but, it was a simple and honest confession leaving any implication and meaning behind and without any pretense.

Miharu also received several love confession after she entered middle school.

Some confessing while looking embarrassed, some confessing with indirect expression as if he has no confidence, some confessing with a commanding voice, some confessing by telling her the various reasons why they love her——.

Rio's confession resounded deep in her heart more than those who confessed before her.

The simple confession is hit right on the spot.

Though it might be depending on the reaction of each person, she unintentionally feels happy for such a confession.

Enough to express that she's the only one in this entire world.

But, she can fully understand his love for her.

(My heart is still pounding loudly.....)

Miharu's confirming her heartbeat by placing her hand on her breast.

Her heartbeat is so loud as if it's about to burst from her chest, the heat that flowing out from her heart is spreading all over her body.

Miharu's heaving a deep and long breath with flushed cheeks as the pain in her heart stopped.

(I wonder if Haruto-san won't come to visit)

It's been quite a while since the end of evening party but, I wonder what Haruto-san is doing right now.

Miharu's thinking so while staring at the door of the room.

But, no matter how much times elapsed, Rio's not coming to visit.

——Something that he want to tell me. It's shameless story but, will you hear the continuation of my story later ?

Rio said those words that could only be heard to Miharu after Aki and the others were barging onto the balcony.

I wonder what is the something that he wants to tell me, when will he come, what will be the continuation of his story.

Miharu couldn't help but worry about it.

——Whether I'm sleeping, awake or, reincarnated, you're the one who I love.

Those words resound deep into Miharu mind.

(He said "Reborn" right.....)

That's mean, maybe Rio knew about Miharu in his previous life.

Rio introduced himself as Haruto when they first met in this world.

That name was resounding deeply inside Miharu's heart because the resemblance of his name with Amakawa Haruto who she missed so much.

## Part 5

There's even times when the image of Rio is mirroring that of Haruto.

But, that's just a mere coincident and not lingering in her consciousness.

Because, such coincident is impossible to happen since Amakawa haruto should be on earth right now.

Such coincident in which Amakawa Haruto reincarnated in this world and then growing up till reaching adulthood is almost impossible to happen.

She's always reminding herself to not compare the resemblance between Amakawa Haruto and Rio.

Because doing so is rude to both of them.

But, there's still the possibility that Rio, or Haruto is actually her childhood friend, Amakawa Haruto.

Though Amakawa Haruto is dead in her dream, he might be reborn as the current Haruto——

There's no way she can treat the event that happened in her dream as the real thing but, Miharuru began to consider the possibilities of such things to happen due to Rio's confession.

(I can't understand this anymore. Is Haruto-san..... Actually Haru-kun ? )

Miharuru was standing still in the middle of the room with a confused face.

She's lost like a child.

But, If Rio then turned out to be Amakawa Haruto——

If that is true then there's so many things that she wanted to say to him.

Words are not enough to convey that.

Because her answer is as clear as day.

She wants to meet Rio right away to hear the continuation of his story.

Maybe you already forgot about that matter but, on a certain day 9 years



ago—— —

She almost missed those words because the coming of Aki who's barging at the most crucial part but, Haruto might be about to tell her the continuation of his story.

Rio with a seemingly frightened expression is resurfacing in Miharu's mind.

When she's troubling over such a event, the door of the room is opened.

Miharu's body trembled while looking toward the direction of the door.

"..... I'm back. You're still awake"

The one who entered the room was Takahisa.

He's staring at Miharu with a perplexed expression.

"Uhn..... Welcome back"

Miharu heaved a sigh as if her body lost it's power while welcoming Takahisa.

Her gesture is a mix between relief and disappointment.

"What about Aki and Masato ? "

"They're sleeping in the room. Aren't you tired standing like that for a long time"

"You're right....."

A short silence is descending into the room.

Due to a somewhat awkward atmosphere, there's no conversation between them.

"Shall I brew tea for you ? "

Miharu's asking Takahisa.

"Ah, yes. I'll take that offer....."

At Takahisa's request, Miharu's going toward the simple kitchen built in the room.

In a few minutes, the tea is done and she brought it to the living room.

"Here you go"

"Thank you....."

## Part 6

After placing the tea pot on the table along with the kotori, Takahisa's sipping the tea in his cup.

"..... It's delicious. Just like the one made by Fril"

Takahisa told his impression in amazement.

Fril is Lilyana's attendant.

Once, Takahisa tried to drink the tea made by another person other than Fril.

But, the tea made by that person was clearly different and even inferior in taste from the one that is usually made by Fril.

In spite of using the same tea leaves.

"..... Because someone taught me how to brew the tea"

Miharu told Takahisa with a shy expression.

"..... Is it Haruto-san ? "

Takahisa's asking with a stiff tone.

"Uhn"

Miharu's nodding while smiling gently.

"I see....."

Takahisa showed a self-depreciated smile.

Thus, ten minutes passed by while they're having such a short conversation.

Before long, even such conversation stopped when another ten minutes passed by.

"Hey, it's past the time for you to sleep right ? "

Thus after some time has passed, Takahisa suddenly suggested her to sleep as he was unable to bear such awkward silence.

"..... Yes. But I'm not sleepy yet. How about you Takahisa-kun ? "

"..... I'll wait till Lilyana comes back"

"So that's how it is. You've a really good relationship with Lilyana-sama"

Miharu's telling him that as she smiled gently at him.

"No ! You're mis..... Well, you're right"

Though he's about to deny it right away, Takahisa timidly agreed to her as Lilyana's smiling face suddenly emerged in his mind.

Miharu's staring in amazement at his reaction.

"What's the matter ? "

Miharu chuckled as if she finds that his reaction is amusing.

"It's nothing..... You should go to sleep. Since it's better to lie down even if you're not sleepy yet"

# Part 7

Miharu's hesitating when Takahisa is saying so but,

"Yeah. You're, right..... I'll lie on my bed for the time being. Good night"

She nodded with a hesitating face and then headed toward the bedroom in which Aki is sleeping.



The after party of the evening party which was held in Charlotte's room was going on for almost an hour.

The pleasant conversation is going on for that one hour because of Charlotte's insistence who regretted the fact that it is almost time to end their after party, they're planning to chat more the next morning.

Thus, Rio and Satsuki is leaving Charlotte's room with worn out expressions, when it was just the two of them,

"Hey, aren't you going to visit Miharu-chan and the others room after this ? There's something that you have to tell them right ? "

Satsuki suddenly asked that question to him.

"Yeah, I want to visit them tonight if possible. But, maybe they're already fast asleep" [TL : NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO]

Rio's replying with a troubled expression.

"It's because Haruto-kun is always being hugged by Sharl-chan right"

Satsuki's saying so while pursing her lips.

"Is, that so ? As I thought"

"What are you talking about. No matter how you look at it from any kind of angle, she's always clinging on you"

Satsuki is looking at Rio who replied without self-confidence with a bewildered face.

"..... I've no idea that we look like that from a 3rd party perspective"

"It's because you saved her when she was almost attacked by those burglars. Don't you think that the person who was protecting her is really a splendid guy ? "

Satsuki said those words with a slightly blunt tone while observing Rio's reaction.

"No, if it's for protecting her, there's also the other knights right?. Thus I really have no idea about her reaction....."

"A~h, yup. I see..... I see"

Satsuki's smiling wryly to such a natural reaction from Rio.

And just like that, though Satsuki's fixing her gaze at Rio with a bewildered expression, it feels like she's glaring at him but, it might be just his imagination.

"Well, it's fine to leave it that way though. So, what will you do ? Are you going to visit them or not ? "

Satsuki asked him again after heaving a sigh.

"Shall we go then. There's something that I want to give to her. If it's okay with you, shall we come to my room first ? "

Rio replied right away.

"Naturally"

# Part 8

Satsuki's nodding at him and thus they're heading toward the room in which Miharuru and the others is.



"Isn't this Haruto-sama and Satsuki-sama. May I ask your business ? "

After arriving at the room where Miharuru and the others resting at, the female knight who is also the bodyguard of Lilyana and Takahisa went to ask Rio and Satsuki.

"We want to meet Takahisa-kun and the others, will you tell them that we came ? "

"Certainly. Please wait a minute"

After Satsuki told her business, the female knight, Kiara entered the room while saying "Excuse me".

The one who's waiting in front of the room is Satsuki, Rio and another bodyguard, Alice.

The palace guards of Galward kingdom is also doing their night watch duty. Several tens seconds later the door of the room opened for the second time.

"Sorry to make you wait, senpai"

The one who appeared to greet them was Takahisa.

He's casting a suspicious gaze for a moment at Rio and Satsuki as if suspecting something.

But, he's letting out a worn out smile immediately.

"Sorry for coming at late night. The truth is we wanted to go right after the end of the evening party but there was a small matter that we had to attend. Is Miharuru-chan and the others still awake ? "

Satsuki's asking with a apologetic expression.

"..... I'm sorry. They're already asleep, maybe because they're not used

to the evening party"

Takahisa replied with a gloomy expression.

Aki and Masato is fell asleep right after returning from the evening party and might even be in their deep sleep right now.

But, he was a bit uneasy in regards to Miharuru since she was still awake till just a while ago.

She might feel awkward when it's just the two of them, though Takahisa went to her room and asked whether she is already asleep, not that much time has passed yet.

That's why regarding whether she's already asleep or still awake, Takahisa has no knowledge about it.

Answering that question made him scared.

"A~h, it seems we're a bit too late. It can't be helped then"

Satsuki's saying that with remorse in her tone.

Since they've been expecting that maybe Miharuru and the others are already asleep, thus she's not really discouraged at all when it comes true.

"..... Yes, My apologies"

Takahisa's apologizing with a awkward face.

"It's not like you need to apologize to me right. Are you the only one awake, Takahisa-kun ? "

Satsuki's asking while smiling wryly.



## Part 9

"Yes. Lily is having a short discussion with the king. So I'll be waiting till she comes back....."

Takahisa's nodding at Satsuki.

"If that's the case, we have no choice but to come again tomorrow afternoon"

Rio's shrugging his shoulder as he says so.

"Shall we do that then"

Satsuki's nodding while sighing in regret.

"Do you have some matter to attend to tomorrow morning ? "

Takahisa asked them.

"Yup, we've a plan for a tea party with Shar-..... I mean with princess Charlotte. Thus we'll come for a visit in the afternoon"

"In fact we're also going to be inspecting the magic ship in the morning for Masato and the others. I'm thinking of bring along senpai and the others too but, it seems that's impossible right"

"It seems so. Sorry"

"It's nothing since that is a sudden plan due to Masato who is interested in it"

Takahisa's shaking his head in denial while smiling wryly at her.

"Do you know that you can actually go with them, Satsuki-san ? "

Rio said that to the slightly depressed Satsuki.

Thereupon, Satsuki's glaring at Rio,

"And let you have a nice moment alone with Sharl-chan ? "

So she asked.

"No, I don't mean in that way though..... It's not like I won't be able to meet them tomorrow like how I can't meet them tonight since there's no need to meet me and it's not like Satsuki-san can always be together with them"

Rio's explaining while making a slight excuse.

Though Satsuki's slightly amazed by such unexpected words,

"I-It's not like I can't meet them, fine then"

Replied while turning her face to the side as if feeling embarrassed.

"R-Rather than that ! I wanted to ask Miharuchan and the others about what they really want to do after this. How about you ? Did you tell Takahisakun already ? "

Satsuki's changing the subject of the conversation with blushing cheek.

Though legally speaking it might be the matter that she should ask in the afternoon, Satsuki deliberately avoiding that topic.

She's somehow getting scared to confirm that alone and even if she talks about that matter, she thinks that it's better to have Rio, who has the right for it.

Though fortunately Miharuchan and the others also choose this topic as if to divert the course of conversation to another direction and adding the fact that Rio's quite busy nowadays, the situation turned into this.

## Part 10

"Uhm, right now, it seems that everyone is being anxious about various things and thinking about what they have to do from now on....."

Takahisa replied with a slightly stiff expression after the sudden change of topic.

Though he at least managed to keep his tone to normal, Takahisa heart is beating like crazy.

His body feels hot as if his blood is boiling up.

That was contrary to what he said in the spur of the moment.

Because Miharuru and the others already spoke of that matter.

But, Aki is the only one who says that she'll go with him——

He's quarreling with his little brother, Masato——

Miharuru's making clear of her intention to go with Rio——

The result of their prediction is not in the least in accordance to Takahisa's prediction.

"I've got a small quarrel with Masato but, Aki decided to go along with me....."

Takahisa's adding those seemingly an excuse for not telling them about Miharuru.

He's averting his gaze from Rio due to his guilty feeling toward him.

Because Takahisa really feels grateful to Rio.

But, deep inside he doesn't want to let Miharuru to meet with Rio.

That's why he doesn't want to tell Rio about Miharuru's wish yet.

In short, it's jealousy.

His jealousy for Rio who's being chosen by Miharuru, for Rio who's spent some time with just the two of them in the evening party, for Rio who became

intimate with Miharu during the time he's not there——

Takahisa finally noticed the jealousy which is lurking deep inside his heart as he witnessed the figure of Rio and Miharu alone on the balcony.

He can't help but to feel ashamed of his own self.

Nonetheless, he can't let go off Miharu and yet he has an indescribable feeling toward Rio, his benefactor.

Moreover, Takahisa who is driven by his sense of duty to not be able to do anything because of Aki who said that she will think of a way to let everyone to be together, and because of his love toward Miharu.

It's already reaching the point of obsession.

The things that he can do is very limited but, he can at least think of it in his own way.

"I see....."

Satsuki's heaving a sigh.

A short silence descended on that place.

Thus, accordingly.

"..... Uhm, Haruto-san"

Takahisa's addressing Rio as if squeezing the last of his voice.

"Yes ? "

"Have you..... Decided in what you're going to do after the end of this evening party ? "

"Yeah, I'm going to leave the royal capital toward the west"

So, Rio replied to Takahisa.

"Then..... Will you come to Saint Stellar kingdom afterward ? Uhm, it seems that everyone is wishing that Haruto-san goes along....."

## Part 11

Because, Miharu might be coming along if Rio is also coming to Saint Stellar kingdom.

That was what Takahisa expected for his reply.

He just wants to use Rio for that purpose.

The person himself is aware that such a act is disgraceful.

But, it's better to be disgraceful than to be a miserable person.

As long as he can be together with the one that he loves.

Even if he has to crawl on the mud, he'll make Miharu look at him.

That was what he thought.

"They want to be with me..... Is that so"

Rio's showing a surprised expression and then the tips of his lips raised slightly.

But, his eyes is shaking lightly as if there's a guilt concealed within.

Thereupon, to that place,

"Ara, I thought it's just me but could it be that everyone is thinking about the same thing ? "

Satsuki's saying so with a smiling expression.

"Yeah, we can easily meet since Saint Stellar kingdom and Galwark kingdom is tied by their defense alliance"

"It's really a wonderful thing that the two kingdoms is not enemies right. So let's make full use of our hero status to break the deadlock of this situation from thereafter"

"Yes"

Takahisa is nodding in agreement.

"Well, let's break up for today. It's hard to talk till late at night and this

world's morning is early too"

Satsuki made that suggestion while stretching her arms lightly.

And suddenly looking at Rio as if recalling something,

"Ah, that's right. There's something that you want to give to Miharu-chan and the others right, Haruto-kun ? If possible you can leave those items to Takahisa-kun ? We took a detour to your room just to fetch those items after all"

Satsuki said so.

Thereupon, Rio's showing a pensive expression,

"You're, right....."

He's hesitated whether to agree with her or not.

"Something to give ? "

Takahisa asked with a puzzled expression.

"..... It's a letter. There's a lot of things I want to let them know but, I have a hard time to say those things to them"

Rio replied timidly with a wry smile.

"He~, letter huh..... It's a old method but, sounds good doesn't it. It should be the common way of communication in this world right"

## Part 12

Satsuki's replying with surprised expression and then expressed her admiration.

"I see..... Well then, will you entrust that letter to me ? "

Takahisa's timidly offering his help.

It was the least atonement for the guilt that he feels toward Rio.

"Uhhhm ....."

"Do you want to give those letters by your own hand ? "

Satsuki who stands by his side is asking in seeing his hesitation.

"..... Yes. But, i want them to read the content as fast as possible"

Rio's replying with a wry smile.

Though Miharuru and others have yet to decide what they're going to do from now on, maybe he'll hear everything by tomorrow afternoon.

According to Takahisa, maybe they already made their decision.

Even so, there's a chance that decision will change when Rio gives his letter.

When he thinks about the content of the letter, maybe they'll need some time to sort their feelings.

That's why Rio wants to give them some time to sort their feeling till the time to talk with Miharuru and others comes.

In fact, he wants to pass this letter to Miharuru and others tonight but, it seems that Miharuru and the others already fell asleep when he was accompanying Charlotte.

In that case, the next most ideal time is tomorrow morning.

Because the pleasant conversation time with Charlotte is after breakfast, maybe he can stop by Miharuru and the others room on the way toward Charlotte's room.

"May i ask whether I'll cause trouble if I come for a brief visit again tomorrow morning ? "

Maybe he can probably deliver the letters right to Miharu and the other two in person.

In addition, he has no choice but to ask a favor from Takahisa if their timing isn't matched.

"..... Yes,it's alright. We'll be leaving after 9 o'clock"

Takahisa replied with a slightly stiff tone.

"Understood. Since Charlotte-sama tea party will begin around the same time, I'll come before that"

Thus their conversation reached a conclusion, Rio will come to visit this room again by tomorrow morning.



# Chapter 110: Letter

The next morning, in Rio's lodging, the time had only passed 8. Rio had just finished his breakfast in a strange situation where two maids were waiting by his side. Private meals were limited due to recent chaos, but the castle still allowed it under a few conditions such as this.

"Haruto-sama, shall I prepare some tea for you?"  
"Yes, please do."

Then, when the maid closer to his age brought it to him, the sound of the door knocking echoed through the room, and she immediately went to answer it.

"Good morning, Haruto-sama."

It was Charlotte coming in.

"Princess Charlotte... Good morning. What do you need?"

Rio returned the greeting, but he was astonished nonetheless. They were going to have a tea party in Charlotte's room, so he had no idea why she would come to him.

"You promised to have a conversation with me this morning, right? It's a little early, but I came to meet you."

Charlotte replied with a charming smile.  
Rio checked the clock settled against the wall. That conversation was supposed to happen at 9 o'clock. She was about an hour early.

It's not like he didn't understand coming earlier due to the sheer scale of the royal castle, but this was still...  
Well, even if he voiced those thoughts to her, it would have gone in one ear and out the other.

"I see. I'm sorry to make you go through the trouble."  
"Fufu, I came because I wanted to see you. Please don't mind it. But if it's alright with you, would you come with me to Satsuki-sama?"  
"Of course. There's somewhere I'd like to stop by that's close to her room. Do

you mind if we go to hand something off before that?"

"Not at all."

Charlotte complied sweetly.

"Then, if you'll please wait a moment for me to prepare."

After making his request, Rio retrieved three letters that he'd left in his item box the night before.



The two of them strolled through the castle at a brisk pace.

"Fufu~"

Charlotte was grinning to herself, keeping a comfortable grasp on Rio's arm. In contrast, Rio was already mentally exhausted.

"Charlotte-sama, sticking so close to me like this is a little..."

"Is it unpleasant?"

She asked him straight, looking at Rio with upturned eyes.

"It's not unpleasant, but about the people around us..."

"Then there's no problem, yes? I don't concern myself with such things."

"I suppose, if you're okay with it..."

He managed a smile to answer hers, but he was suppressing the sigh in his lungs. Of course, Charlotte appeared to be lovingly embracing Rio, but there was something strangely sweet about it. Some indication that she was an innocent young girl acting spoiled.

But he wasn't about to lower his guard just yet. Age aside, Charlotte was still royalty. Fledgling bluebloods were known to be mentally unstable, and they had a tendency to grow arrogant with the power given to them.

Their overly conspicuous conduct and demeanor towards those below them, feeling that it's completely natural, and pouting when things don't go their way—although that last thing is still kind of cute.

The problem is when that turns into a tantrum, it's like walking through a minefield. People start to hold grudges and viciously harass the subject of their ire.

And the most troublesome issue is one of the opposite sex. Namely, women. Rio learned his lesson back when he was still studying in Bertram Kingdom's royal academy.

Charlotte was 13 years old, right when her emotional period should be reaching its peak.

He couldn't afford to act carelessly towards such a girl whose true nature he still had yet to understand. It would be rough staying in the castle if he caused a disturbance—basically, he wasn't about to risk insulting the royalty.

He also had to take into consideration why Charlotte stayed so close to him. It was by order of King Francois that they were together. Rio knew he had to stay cautious around the king at the very least.

After all, it wouldn't be off for him to think about using Rio for his own gain, seeing how close he was getting with Satsuki and how close he already was with her friends.

Even if Charlotte wasn't aware of the purpose herself, the chances of her receiving an order with that goal in mind weren't zero.

And if it was true, it only made things more awkward for him.

"Do you have some business with Takahisa-sama?"

"No. Rather, it's with the three people who were under my protection."

"Is that so? Miharu-sama is quite the beautiful girl."

"Yeah... She is."

He kept his feelings from showing, but Rio felt weird for nodding in agreement so obediently, and Charlotte watched his reaction contentedly. Their conversation ended when they finally made it to the room Miharu and the others were staying in.

They didn't see the escort knight around, though.

*Are they out right now?*

He wondered about it for a moment, then brushed it out of his mind as he took a deep breath.

*Knock, knock.*

[Stupid! Oniichan's a pervert! You have no sense of delicacy!]

The sound of knocking was drowned out by a voice similar to Aki's inside the

room.

[W-Wait a minute, Aki! I'm sorry! Really really sorry! I wasn't trying to peek, honest! I mean, M-Masato is in there, right? I was just looking for Masato! That's all!]

[If you want Masato, he's out looking around the castle since we have some free time! Geez!]

The commotion was loud enough for them to hear most of it.

"It seems we've come at the wrong time."

Charlotte stared dumbly at the door.

"It appears so. Still, let's try once more."

Rio realized they should have read the room and left his matter for later, but he smiled wryly and added some extra force to his knuckles. Any chance that presented itself, he was going to take it.

[Ah—my apologies. Just a moment, please.]

A reply came almost immediately.

[You have a guest, Takahisa-sama. It may be Haruto-sama.]

[U-Understood. Right away. Aki, please wait. Let's talk again when you've calmed down.]

He didn't know exactly what went down inside the room, but it was clear enough that Takahisa seemed to incite Aki's wrath.

The door hurriedly opened about ten seconds later.

On the other side was Takahisa, along with knights Kiara and Alice.

"Thank you very much for waiting. We were a bit busy just... now..."

Takahisa awkwardly made his greetings, and his eyes widened when he saw Charlotte gleefully linking her arms with Rio's.

"Good morning, Takahisa-sama."

"Y-Yes. Good morning, Princess Charlotte."

Responding to Takahisa's timidity, Rio joined in with his normal poker face.

"I'm sorry for disturbing you when you're preoccupied. It's earlier than

expected, but may I ask whether I can meet Miharu-san?"

"Um, let me think... Masato went out for a walk, and it seems she went along with him."

"Yes. If it's Miharu-sama, she accompanied Masato-sama in his exploration of the castle. Hilda joined them as their escort."

Kiara supplemented Takahisa's poor explanation.

"Ahaha... that's about it. In fact, I just got back myself, and Aki's here as well, but..."

And Takahisa finished with a cramped smile on his face.

"Just Aki-chan?"

He wrote a letter for Aki, too, but Rio felt that Miharu should be the first to receive them.

As far as he knew, Aki still hated Amakawa Haruto—he could only imagine what kind of reaction she would have upon learning about Rio's previous life. That's why he wanted Miharu to read hers before Masato and Aki.

Would it be alright if he let Aki read hers first?

Rio couldn't really predict that.

He was scared. That's all there was to it.

"They should return... about half past nine at the latest. I mentioned yesterday that Masato wanted to check out the magic ship this morning."

"I see..."

Rio heaved a sigh. No matter how much he tried, he always seemed to just miss the right timing for things.

His freedom was cut during his stay in the castle, and Miharu was lodging in a different room.

But the biggest reason for that was probably—no, the main culprit was definitely standing right beside him, and Rio glanced at her.

When she noticed his gaze, Charlotte gave him the same sweet smile she always did.

*I missed Miharu-san last night because of this girl, and it's happening again now.*

He was nearly driven to disregard their status and treat her coldly, barely managing to hold himself back.

*No, maybe this is just the best case scenario. At least I managed to confess last night.*

If he didn't tell Miharuru his feelings last night, he likely wouldn't have gotten any time today between Charlotte's clinginess and having a large group during the meeting they planned this afternoon. Aside from Miharuru, there was also going to be Aki, Masato, Satsuki, Takahisa and Liliana.

There was no way he could confess in that situation.

He didn't know if they could get time alone; he didn't know how Aki would react; the discussion itself probably wouldn't have the right atmosphere for it; and it's entirely possible Miharuru and the kids make their decision before then. It might be easier to just say goodbye then.

"If Aki-sama is inside, this should be enough for Haruto-sama to complete his business, right? Takahisa-sama must be a busy person, as well."

Charlotte cut in and urged Rio on when he hesitated to speak.

"... Yeah."

He agreed to her suggestion with a composed smile.

*What to do...*

He thought of five options:

1. Entrust Takahisa to pass the letters alone.
2. Have him call for Aki so she could receive the letters,
3. Stay as long as possible for Miharuru and Masato to return.
4. Go on a search for Miharuru and Masato himself while they wandered the castle.
5. Give them the letters personally when they were going to see each other later in the day.

He honestly wanted them to read the letters as soon as possible. They'd probably be left confused when they read them, so he felt it right for them to have time to process the contents.

The tea party he'd promised with Charlotte and Satsuki was to start at 9, and

since it was already 8:30 they were going to need to leave soon to meet with Satsuki on time. Even if he and Charlotte waited until the last minute, there was no guarantee Miharu would be back in time.

Rio made his decision.

"... Takahisa-san, may I ask that you give them these letters?"

"I don't mind, but it's okay to at least call for Aki, right?"

Saying so, Takahisa turned to go back inside. One of the three the letters were meant for was still in the room, so he thought calling her might be a better choice.

"No. Please wait."

But Rio stopped him, and Takahisa looked back.

"There are three letters, but I wish for Miharu-san to be the first to read it. Could you hand Masato and Aki-chan theirs after?"

"... Yes, I understand."

That was a lie. He wasn't able to grasp the meaning behind his explanation, but Takahisa nodded obediently when he saw the pained look on Rio's face. The addressee's names were written in Strahl's regional language, and there was a sealing wax to keep anyone but the intended reader from opening it.

"Best regards, then. I'll come to visit again later with Satsuki-san."

"Yeah. I'll be waiting."

After Takahisa bid his farewell, Rio turned to Charlotte.

"Charlotte-sama, I'm very sorry to make you wait for the sake of my personal business."

"No need to worry, I'm fine with it. But we should hurry to pick up Satsuki-sama. We don't want to be late and have her come looking for us."

Charlotte quickly seized Rio's arm again, dragging him off with all the grace and finesse of a bull in a china shop.



"It makes you wonder just what's written inside, riiight? Maybe it's a love letter."

When Rio and Charlotte were no longer in sight, Alice jumped in with a bright and carefree tone. Takahisa, surprised by her voice, took a glance at the letters in his hand, and her senior knight Kiara rebuked her.

"Alice, that's disgraceful."

She normally had a calm and graceful aura about her, but there was a peculiarly sharp edge to Kiara's words.

"Eh~. Doesn't it make you uneasy?"

"It does, but we shouldn't be peeping on someone's private correspondence."

"Aha, so Kiara-senpai's bothered by it, too."

"You sure know how to run your mouth."

"Ahaha..."

Alice broke out in a cold sweat at the pressure exuding from her senior, and quickly moved the topic along.

"Even so, Takahisa-sama seems worried, too. I'm positive, he's definitely in love with that childhood friend of his, right? And if Liliana-sama enters the stage, we'll see it turn into a forbidden love triangle...!"

"Hey, that's why the saying goes..."

Kiara and Alice spoke in a low volume, but it seems that their little exchange didn't even register in Takahisa's ears. He was just staring silently at the letters. Then the door to the room with only Aki inside opened.

Takahisa shook, reflexively trying to hide the letters in his chest pocket. Rushing to hide them, though, the letters slipped from his pocket and fluttered to the floor.

He swung his arms to collect them, smacking one against his abdomen. He felt a disconcerting crushing sensation, but he managed to catch another.

The last one fell at Kiara's feet. In his panic to retrieve it, he dropped the two he already grabbed.

"Ah—crap!"

Takahisa snatched up the two he just lost and clutched them tightly in his right hand. He tried to grab the last letter with his left, but thankfully Kiara had already caught it and avoided him making things worse.



"What are you doing, Oniichan?"

That's when Aki came out to see him squatting down with a suspicious look on his face.

And Takahisa snapped to attention, hiding the letters behind his back without checking the damage.

"Oh, um, Aki, what's the matter?"

He knew he had offended her a few minutes ago, but at the moment he was more worried about her discovering the letters he was holding.

"It's nothing. It sounds like Haruto-san just came by... Did he say anything?"

Aki replied a little bluntly. She was probably still angry.

"Ah—yes. He already left, but he said he'd come over again with Satsuki-senpai this afternoon."

"I see..."

*This is bad. I made a promise, but if Aki sees this letter now...*

Straining his mind, Takahisa absentmindedly started squeezing the letters in his hand. Tracing one with his fingers, he noticed something peeling off. Right behind him, Kiara stiffened up, while Alice stared at the letters with a dangerous "ohh" slipping from her lips.

"By the way, did you pick something up? You were on the ground just a second ago."

"N-No, that's not true."

Takahisa denied it with a fake smile, his grip on the letters strengthening as he did.

"Is that so...? You're not trying to hide anything, are you?"

"It's the truth, I'm not hiding anything."

He answered Aki's prying eyes with a shrill voice, averting his gaze out of guilt. He could feel the sweat drenching his body.

But then Aki's expression shifted as if she noticed something, and she glared at him with flushed cheeks.

"You forgot what you saw earlier, right?"

"Earlier...? Ah—"

Takahisa figured it out as soon as he repeated the question. He had just come back to their room after escorting Liliana to meet with the king. Since he couldn't find Miharuru or his siblings in the living room, he callously barged into Aki and Miharuru's bedroom. And thus he bore witness to the immodest sight of his stepsister changing her clothes.

"Naturally!"

He nodded vigorously.

"So, j-just forget it already..."

"Ahaha..."

The sharpness of Aki's glare grew with the redness of her face, but she gave him a bit of leeway knowing it was unintentional. Takahisa knew it was his fault for not knocking, though.

"It's not like I have a wonderful body I can show off, but there's no way I could defend you if Miharuru-oneechan was here."

Unlike Aki and her washboard chest so flat a bra did more harm than good, Miharuru had a very well-developed femininity betraying her petite stature.

"Uh..."

Takahisa was left speechless.

"Well, Miharuru-oneechan would probably still let you off because of how kind she is."

"I-I'm very sorry. Honestly. Please forgive me."

He bowed repeatedly to show his sincerity.

"It's okay, I guess... More than that, about Haruto-san. I'll say it now since Miharuru-oneechan and Masato are out."

Then Aki suddenly changed the topic.

In reality, she was the one who lured Masato out of the room, and convinced Miharuru to follow him and make sure he didn't get into trouble.

She let out a sigh, knowing she took a rather roundabout method to getting a

private conversation with Takahisa.

"Y-Yes?"

His face stiffened up.

"Y'see, I... It's just my own idea, but I think it's okay for Haruto-san to come with us. If he does, Miharuno-nee will come, too."

"I think so, too. That's why I told Haruto-san the same thing yesterday."

Takahisa replied with a nod, having already reached the same conclusion.

"Eh? Is that so? When?"

"Last night, after everyone went to sleep."

"I see... What did Haruto-san say?"

"He told me after the party last night that he has some kind of errand in the west of Strahl. Do you know anything about that, Aki?"

When he asked, Aki thought back.

"Not really. We lived in the same place for a long time, but he never told us much about himself or what he does... Maybe he has something to take care of in Almond?"

Aki's answer left a huge question mark on Takahisa's face.

"Almond?"

"Yeah. That's the place we lived up till now."

"So that's where... Though I can kind of tell he won't come to Saint Stella even after he finishes his business. He didn't say anything about what he needed to do, but I don't think it's anything bad."

"In that case, I think we can use that time to persuade Miharuno-nee to join us."

Takahisa just stared in amazement.

"I get it. We can go that way, too, huh? You're brilliant, Aki..."

At least, since he was lacking in flexibility, he couldn't have thought of it.

"It's obvious if you take a second to think. You're just uncreative, Oniichan. You can barely hold a proper conversation, right? You're lucky I'm helping you here."

"Yeah... you're right."

Soon, Takahisa's cheeks loosened up seeing Aki beaming with pride.

"Another thing. If we're doing this, you have to make sure you win over Miharuno-nee, you know. You can't stay a hopeless case forever."

"H-Hopeless? What are you talking about? I mean, I, uh..."

His face shone red, stumbling over his own words. He was trying to keep his crush secret, and his little sister could tell so easily. Aki's sighs grew heavier at his reaction, as well.

"I know you love Miharuno-nee, right, Oniichan? You're like an open book."

"Eh? W-Why?"

At this point, Takahisa wasn't even trying to hide his feelings.

By the way, they were speaking in Japanese.

Thanks to his divine raiment translating for him, Alice and Kiara listening off to the side could understand Takahisa, but Aki didn't have one, so eavesdropping was a little difficult.

"Why, you ask... Anyone could figure it out if they just look at you. You're always trying to be alone with Miharuno-nee, but when you get the chance you avoid her. Then there's times where you're awkward and can't even look her in the eyes."

Every point she listed off hit the mark.

Put simply, Takahisa was a coward. Sometimes he'd even act cold when the two of them were alone.

"I... It can't be helped. Things like that would happen for any normal man."

Aki heaved a deeper sigh to his answer, then peered at him inquisitively.

"Aren't you uneasy? About Miharuno-nee and Haruto-san. When they disappeared during the party yesterday. Wonder what they talked about."

"That's..."

Takahisa was worried about it, too. He couldn't help thinking about what Rio and Miharuno spoke about during the evening party.

"I tried to ask her, but..."

"W-What'd she say?"

He was startled at Aki's remark, since she did something he couldn't bring himself to.

"Um, what'd they talk about?"

"It wasn't anything important. We interrupted them before they got into it..."

"Is... Is that so..."

Takahisa let out a breath of relief as if he'd been holding it in.

"Still, don't you think those two were acting suspicious?"

"No—ah, well... what about you? Haruto-san, he seems like a good person."

Feeling like he was hit with a loaded question, Takahisa tried to dodge it with a vague answer, and Aki knitted her eyebrows hearing it.

"Haruto-san is a really amazing man, you know. He's a bit clumsy, but he's gentle, cool, handsome, reliable, and he can cook, too. And..."

After bringing Takahisa's nervousness to a boiling point, Aki paused with a gloom in her face as she thought on her next words. The figure of Amakawa Haruto, her former big brother, came to mind.

"And?"

Takahisa gulped down his saliva when Aki hesitated.

"It's nothing. Maybe Miharu-oneechan has someone she likes. If she forgot about him, she might come to like Haruto-san instead..."

From that, Takahisa looked like he'd taken a few hits to the head from a blunt object, and his face lost its color.

"Someone... she likes? Miharu?"

"No. Well, yeah. Probably..."

"So, that's how it is..."

His spirit dropped inch by inch, then Aki started to cheer him on as if she was preaching.

"B-But, maybe that man will never appear in front of Miharu-oneechan again.

This is your chance, Oniichan!

That's why you can't run away now! Sure, I'm indebted to Haruto-san, but if you can't get between Miharuno-nee and Haruto-san now, all you'll have left later is regrets!"

"Aki..."

Takahisa trembled, then righted himself.

"... That's right. I'll give it a shot. I've got a bit of confidence back now. Thank you."

"Yeah! You can do this, Oniichan!"

Aki raised her fist high when Takahisa smiled at her. And that's when Kiara impatiently spoke up.

"Takahisa-sama... About that..."

She was staring at the crumpled letters behind his back.

"Eh?"

*What did she mean by that?*

He was distracted. But after a look in her eyes he immediately realized he wasn't in a position for holding a conversation.

"A-Ah... that's right. Aki, can you go back in the room for a little while? I have to take care of something real quick."

Takahisa spoke with a rushed tone.

"Okay, but... you'll be back soon, right?"

"O-Of course."

Reassuring her, Aki left the hall. After she left, Alice pointed to the letters more directly.

"Um, what should we do? The letters are..."

"Uh..."

Takahisa froze as he glanced at the letters in his hands. Two were crushed so badly that the sealing wax had mostly come off.

"W-What do I do...?"

He looked at Kiara as if she had the answer, and she replied anxiously.

"E-Even if you ask me... We don't have any choice but to restore them as much as possible before we hand them off to Miharu-sama and the others, and explain the situation when we do. We mustn't forget to apologize to Haruto-sama, as well."

"That's... Yeah, you're right."

"Please lend it to me. In this state the letter inside is surely crumpled, too. Since the wax has peeled off, let's remove the letter and smooth it out properly on the wall."

She wanted to do it inside the room, but Aki was inside, and she couldn't neglect her guard duties as a knight. So she decided to take care of things where they stood.

"... P-Please do. I'll help, too."

"Alice, please help Takahisa-sama."

"Kay~. The letter please, Takahisa-sama."

"Thank you."

After Kiara received a letter, Takahisa removed the one addressed to Aki from its envelope and handed it off to Alice. As expected, the letter was messed up as badly as the envelope.

"Please do your best to not tear it and render it unreadable."

The most composed of them, Kiara was quick to take the lead and give them orders, and with careful dexterity they smoothed out the crumpled papers. It was a little comical seeing the three of them against the wall outside their room like this.

*I wonder who this letter's for.*

While pressing out the wrinkles of the envelope in his hands, Takahisa started thinking to himself.

Aki's name was written on the surface in Strahl Regional. Although his divine raiment translated speech, he still couldn't read the languages in this world. To his left, Alice was smoothing out the letter, mumbling under her breath.

"Mmm, I can't figure these weird letters out one bit."

"H-Hey, Alice! I told you before you shouldn't be peeping on someone else's private communications!"

"Ehh, but it was facing me, so it couldn't be helped. Besides, I can't even understand any of this. What small country are these characters from? Shouldn't it be fine to just write in our common language?"

Despite her mutterings, she was still doing her job.

"... You should have done it from the back. I swear, this girl..."

Kiara continued her work as well, after voicing her dissatisfaction with her junior.

The language she called "common" is one used by the majority of the countries in the Strahl region, referred to as Strahl Regional. However, other languages aren't suppressed, so they can develop in parts of the region or in individual countries. Some even become a national language. And his curiosity piqued by the knights' little spat, Takahisa took a peek at the letter Alice was taking care of.

"That's... Japanese..."

Going by the characters on the envelopes, Takahisa was convinced the letters were written in Strahl Regional, but the one he got a look at was in bonafide Japanese.

He hadn't read or written much of anything in Japanese in the months since he'd come to this world, but it was still his native language; he'd recognize it anywhere.

"Hm? Takahisa-sama, you can read this?"

"Eh... No, yeah, I can..."

Takahisa nodded in affirmation.

*Why did Haruto-san write his letter in Japanese? You could say the others were teaching him, but this level of fluency is...*

Just from a glance he knew it wasn't something that could have been written by a novice who only started learning a few months ago.

The grammatical structure of Japanese resembled Strahl's language, but the sheer number of characters and its vocabulary made the former far more



difficult.

Guessing from a sentence that caught his eye, the letter in Alice's hands was meant for Aki.

It would have been a lie to say he didn't feel bad about it.

He was driven by the temptation, eyes running back and forth over the first few sentences.

*I can't do this! I shouldn't be reading it!*

Takahisa shook his head, trying to get it out of his mind.

It was against his morals. Against all decency.

There probably wasn't a punishment for reading it, but he felt he couldn't invade someone else's privacy.

But maybe because it's been so long since he'd seen Japanese, he couldn't pull away.

Getting into a famous prep school back home wasn't just for show, his reading comprehension was a cut above the rest.

But the letter in front of him threw his heart into disarray.

"Eh...?"

His face paled.

His vision narrowed.

He thought maybe he was going crazy.

"Aki's... brother? Previous life?"

Takahisa couldn't wipe the dumbfounded look off his face if he tried.

In the letter addressed to Aki it was written that Haruto was originally Amakawa Haruto, Aki's older brother.

There was no making sense of it to him.

He stared at the characters to make sure he didn't possibly read it wrong, but there was no mistake.

"Can you... let me see that letter for a bit?"

"Eh? Ah... here."

Confused herself, Alice obediently handed it over.

*How can Haruto, someone of this world, be Aki's older brother?*

He couldn't understand.

Takahisa's heart pounded, his brain flooded with adrenaline.

It was enough to overpower his sense of guilt from crudely reading someone else's letter, and he stared at the paper intensely.

Alice watched on, but Kiara was just barely too late to catch wind of Takahisa doing exactly the thing she said not to do.

"Hm? Ah—T-Takahisa-sama! What are you doing?"

She started to scold him when she finally noticed, but Takahisa wasn't listening. He was scanning the letter again and again, eyes wide in shock.

"Takahisa-sama, please cease at once! You shouldn't be doing this!"

But she was too late.

Takahisa already understood everything the letter meant to say.

Maybe because he finally accepted it, the grim look on his face grew worse by the second.

"What... What the hell is all this?"

Takahisa's gaze turned to the letter at Kiara's feet—the one addressed to Miharu.

He only came back to his senses when the slip of paper was already in his hand, consumed by his curiosity.

"You can't! Takahisa-sama!"

Kiara tried to get ahead of him and keep the letter away, but he moved first.

"Doing something like forcing open the seal of a noble's letter by anyone other than the recipient is a crime, you know? To say nothing of reading its contents..."

She couldn't go openly go against him as the hero he was, but Kiara still hoped persuasion by reason would work.

Unfortunately, Takahisa didn't care, having gotten absorbed in reading. The letter itself was beyond saving, too, crumpled as badly as it was.

"P-Please return the letter! This is really a crime!"

Kiara was whispering as loudly as she could, restlessly glancing back and forth

down the hall.

"Too late, senpai. He already finished the first one."

And maybe she just didn't understand the gravity of their situation, but Alice's tone was particularly carefree.

"Geez, I don't know anymore. Can't tell you what's going to happen to us..."



*To Ayase Miharuru.*

*Last night, I confessed to you selfishly and one-sidedly, which may have confused you.*

*My deepest apologies for doing such a thing.*

*What followed was unexpected, but this letter is so I can tell you what I couldn't last night.*

*Maybe what you're about to read isn't a very interesting story.*

*In fact, maybe it's not even something I should say, since it might disturb Miharuru-san to hear it.*

*But this is something I want to tell you, no matter what.*

*That's why, even though I'm not happy with the method, I decided a letter would be best.*

*If you can't bring yourself to keep reading, there's no need to force yourself. This is all for my own satisfaction as it is. In case you won't read further, please forget everything about me, live together with Takahisa-san and the others, and look for a way to return to Earth.*

*I'll do all I can to help you, but if you don't want to be involved with me, I promise not to approach you.*

*The preface was a bit long, but from this point it'll be my story, step by step.*

*You might have already noticed it. I met Miharuru-san in my previous life.*

*My name was Amakawa Haruto. I was your childhood friend.*

*I believe I used to call you "Mii-chan" when we were kids, right?*

*I remember Miharuru-san called me "Haru-kun".*

*Twice in my life as Amakawa Haruto, I was with Miharuru-san.*

*First was up until we were seven years old, before I moved away. Then there*

*was a brief moment just as we were entering high school.*

*Although, it was just me who saw you during the entrance ceremony.*

*Do you remember?*

*Miharu-san was by my side, and I by yours. It felt like those days would go on forever.*

*If you ask me why, it's because I love Miharu-san. There was nothing I could do; I was head over heels for you.*

*But, that only lasted until elementary school.*

*I was forced to separate from Miharu-san and move to another city. I lost all contact with you since.*

*It should be about nine years ago for Miharu-san.*

*At that time, we made a promise to each other.*

*Normally something like a promise you made as kids would be something you give up on as you grow up.*

*Not to mention the ridiculousness of trying to fulfill that promise. It could be a fool's errand.*

*Even so, that promise with Miharu-san is Amakawa Haruto's strongest support.*

*Because he loved you.*

*Because he wanted to see Miharu-san's smile again.*

*Because his memories with Miharu-san were an irreplaceable treasure to him.*

*The me at the time was kid. When I think on it, I didn't understand the how or that reuniting with Miharu-san would be a distant future.*

*But, I thought that I would be able to meet you again as long as I tried my hardest.*

*Then a feeling came over me that the Miharu-san I wished for would leave if I didn't.*

*So I did my best in everything without exception, like a single-minded idiot, just for the hope of meeting Miharu-san again.*

*Growing that way, maybe as a reward for my efforts, I got the chance to enter the same high school as Miharu-san.*

*From a passing glance, even now I can still feel my body trembling when I saw you that day.*

*But the Amakawa Haruto at the time had become a bit of a sore loser. Seeing Miharusan so friendly with an unknown guy, I ran away hoping I wouldn't have to face the truth.*

*Of the fact that maybe Miharusan forgot about someone like me.*

*While I was hiding from you, you suddenly vanished without a trace. Although now I know it's because you were summoned to this world.*

*I never got over my regrets ever since Miharusan disappeared. I couldn't stand never being able to tell you how I felt. I took those regrets to my grave. But somehow, I was reincarnated here.*

*That's why I was so surprised, but I was overjoyed. Being able to meet you again in this cruel world. I kept thinking I would never see Miharusan again. I was truly happy that day.*

*And yet, all I did was run away from Miharusan like before. I had enough of regrets, is what I thought, but I was scared.*

*Whether in this life or the last, I'm an ugly, self-centered coward. Over time, constantly thinking, the fleeting wish I pursued slowly crumbled, but I still lived in those inexorably shattered dreams.*

*I was lost, and even now I still hesitate to continue writing, afraid of this dream finally fading away for good.*

*I am—Amakawa Haruto is already dead. I myself still don't understand what happened to me, but the man called Amakawa Haruto died four years after the disappearance of Miharusan from Japan.*

*Then the Amakawa Haruto who was supposed to have died was reborn as an orphan named Rio.*

*That's why, though my circumstances have me calling myself "Haruto", I write this letter not as Amakawa Haruto, but as Rio.*

*This body is different. Even with the memories and personality that made up Amakawa Haruto, I'm an existence born of the fusion of two souls.*

*It's strange, but it was surprisingly easy to accept when I reincarnated in this world that "I am Rio."*

*Naturally I'm aware that I was Amakawa Haruto, but I don't think the current me is him.*

*No matter how many of his memories and personality traits were left behind, the man called Amakawa Haruto became a completely different person in the nine years after regaining his memories.*

*The me now understands that if someone is trying to injure me or take my life, it's necessary to defend myself. I won't hesitate to fight back, and kill in return.*

*There are times where I completely disregard my ethics, and only think about risk and return to decide my actions.*

*In fact, I've hurt and killed for reasons that, if I were Japanese, people would think I was insane.*

*And there's a man I'm seeking revenge against.*

*If I meet him, I'll probably kill him, even if it isn't necessary.*

*Because I hate that man from the depths of my soul.*

*Such a self is so ugly that even I know I'm broken somewhere, but I don't see myself changing.*

*I've already accepted that part of me, so the only way I can move is forward.*

*That's why when I met Miharusan, who didn't change at all, I was afraid.*

*Maybe the me of that previous life really was Amakawa Haruto.*

*Maybe this personality, these memories, they're not fakes given to me by someone else.*

*But even if I was once Amakawa Haruto, I wonder if I'm not a completely different person.*

*Is the different me qualified to love you?*

*Is it okay for a dead man to love someone who's still alive?*

*The point is, I don't fully understand what I am myself.*

*I definitely feel that I love Miharusan.*

*But, that's because there's so little left of when I was Amakawa Haruto.*

*Everything that is Amakawa Haruto is gone, except for his love for you.*

*Somewhere in my heart I wondered that perhaps this desire just happened to mix in with these memories.*

*I couldn't help it.*

*I was scared to be rejected by you when I tell you about all this.*

*I was scared that Miharusan would hate me, knowing what kind of person I am. What I've become.*

*So in my fear I chose to live with Miharusan and the others while hiding my identity.*

*I want to confess these feelings of mine. Nothing will change if I don't. I understand that.*

*Otherwise, one day you may disappear from my side again.*

*But even if I know my time with you was just a transient dream of my own imprudence, I was happy to live under the same roof with all of you.*

*I truly feared the moment that dream would fall apart once I confessed.*

*But eventually, I managed to say the words I've always wanted to. I didn't want to make the same mistake I did last time.*

*Maybe you want to go back home.*

*Maybe you already have someone you like.*

*I know it's selfish, but before Miharusan disappears again, I don't want to be left with the regret of giving up before I even start.*

*I already know it all too well.*

*I don't want to lose Miharusan this time without being able to convey my feelings.*

*That's something I dread more than even being hated by Miharusan.*

*That's why, if I'm going to say it, I want to say it from the beginning.*

*So I never feel that regret again, I'll confess my love for Miharusan once more.*

*The time I spent with you was short, but it made me realize.*

*My feelings for you aren't fake, or influenced by anyone.*

*Not as Amakawa Haruto. Not as Rio. None of that matters. I am me, and the me right now is in love with Miharusan.*

*It took me a while to notice something so simple.*

*And it's thanks to Miharusan that I could.*

*So, please let me say it again.*

*I love you, Miharusan.*

*It's no longer possible for me to fulfill our promise from when we were kids,*

*but will you stay with me after this?*

*Year 1000 Sacred Calendar, Month of Spring, a certain day.*

*Rio/Amakawa Haruto*

*P.S. When we can next meet, please look forward to my birthday present for you, Miharu-san.*



# Chapter 111: The Black Knight, His Name Is

After he read every parts written in that letter, Takahisa stood on his place with a dumbfounded expression.

The inside of his head turned pure white as he feels a bitter taste in his mouth.

"What the hell. This is....."

Takahisa's face became frozen solid as he raised a remark as if squeezing his voice.

What he couldn't understand is what the meaning of the content of that letter.

He can't stop his trembling heart.

Though they were together for a long time, he wasn't aware of this fact.

About the other childhood friend of Miharuru.

About the other older brother of Aki.

Because he never saw both Miharuru or Aki showing that sort of sign at all.

Until they arrived in this world.

Not even to consider the thing which had been lost.

He's not aware of anything that was given to him nor he have any question about it.

Protecting someone.

Takahisa's the only one who was spending his life happily——

"U-Uhm, Takahisa-sama ? "

Kiara's calling to him in seeing him showing an unusual reaction.

But, her voice never reached Takahisa.

(He was the older brother of Aki, loved by Miharuru and her childhood friend ? )

Takahisa's pondering about that point.

Rio who was once Amakawa Haruto is confessing his love to Miharu.

Maybe the person who Miharu loves is Amakawa Haruto.

That must be why Miharu can unconsciously feels the trace of Amakawa Haruto in Rio.

Takahisa suddenly imagined the figure of Rio standing on the place where he should be at.

Along with Miharu, Aki and Masato——

"..... ! "

He's attacked by a severe feeling of rejection.

He can even try to imagine that fact as a fact.

He also doesn't want to.

"Why someone like Rio, Haruto is right on the side of Miharu and the others——"

"Unfair..... Yeah, so unfair. Isn't this unfair to me? The thing that he does is....."

Takahisa suddenly muttered to himself.

"He's lying. He cheated Aki and Miharu"

"He's trying to bind Miharu with a debt of gratitude—— He's trying to restrain Miharu with sympathy—— Outside, he says something like [I'm respecting Miharu and the others own will] while in fact trying to guide their will.

Yes, it was Rio who is always pulling a trick toward Miharu and the others.

He was the one who is betraying Miharu and the Others.

Isn't he such a selfish man.

"What do you mean by harming someone since it's necessary ? Killing a human ? That's impossible right. Such a thing ! "

The feeling which is gradually arising in him is eventually coming out in verbal form.

He really can't understand what kind of nerves one needed to kill someone.

Even if he is a former Japanese, normally it shouldn't be so easy for him to kill someone just because it's necessary.

Even if it's for self-defense the public will talk about it behind his back in Japan.

That kind of simple solution of killing someone if it's necessary to live on is absolutely wrong.

He can't put his sympathy to that kind of person and feeling uneasy for the "Good person" evaluation on him by Miharu and the others.

Much less to say, he can't help but worrying if that kind of man is staying by Miharu and the others side.

And then, a strong desire was swirling inside of Takahisa.

Such unrestrained emotion is on the peak of heat.

The chaos and excitement makes him feel dizzy.

As if heaven and earth is completely overturned.

Even so, it was the feeling that he recognized as clear as day.

"I won't let that killer to be along with Miharu"  
Takahisa muttered with a subdued voice.



Takahisa's standing still at his place with a sour expression and then someone appeared and called his name.

"I wonder what are you doing by standing still at this place, Takahisa? And for the three of you to be here....."

It was Lilyana who was taking along Fril, the maid, with her.

She's coming upon the figure of Takahisa standing on the corridor when she returned to her room after she's done with the negotiation with Francois.

"AAAh, Lily..... So you've returned"

Though he noticed Lilyana, Takahisa's reaction is dull.

It feels like his body is here but, not his soul.

"Yeah, since I only need to sign the official form of the alliance.....

What's the matter, Kiara ? "

While talking with Takahisa, Lilyana who is seeing Kiara's reaction is asking for a confirmation of the situation.

"M-My deepest apologies ! Lilyana-sama. The truth is——"

Kiara's apologizing with a pale face and then began to explain the situation to Lilyana.

She then proceeded to the explanation of the fact that transpired at that place objectively.

And then, Lilyana felt anxious after she heard the entirety of Kiara's explanation.

Takahisa's saying so with a sullen expression.

"Takahisa-sama....."

Lilyana's heaving a sigh as if troubled by it.

Up till now, she always respecting Takahisa's will as far as possible.

Though he's lacking the life experience due to his young age, Takahisa's bad nature will appear in his speech and conduct when he became too hot blooded.

It seems the person himself is aware of that fact but, he never left any fatal mistake which can't be undone in his young age.

Therefore Takahisa's never even considered to fix that nature of him.

Lilyana was also captured by such a nice disposition of Takahisa.

That's why she never thought of trying to fix that side of him immediately since she also has a duty as the princess to win him over toward their side.

But, only this case she can't act like usual.

Because Takahisa doesn't seem like the kind of people who will do what he

likes just because he's a hero to Lilyana.

Since it'll implied on so many things by bringing in a hero to her country, in the end she has no choice to scold him for the sake of her own country.

Lilyana has not enough power to settle everything with her limited authority except for something necessary.

Moreover, she thinks that trying to settle this case with power is a poor move.

She might be able to do something if this is Saint Stellar kingdom.

But, Rio, the victim is a noble of Galwark kingdom, even Lilyana can't freely wield her authority in Galwark kingdom.

"Though it's the type of crime that will need the victim side to file the complaint, intentionally tearing the letter which is written by a noble is a crime. Do you understand that now ? "

Lilyana asked with a calm voice.

Since there's many confidential matters in the letter written by noble, one will become the subject of the rules when they were intentionally violating highly restricted information.

It's going as far as death penalty if that letter happened to be highly classified information, even if it happened to not be highly classified information, it's not something praiseworthy either since they basically stepped into another person's privacy.

Furthermore, there'll be additional punishment waiting upon them in case they're conveying the content of that unsealed letter to another person.

"Eh.....? "

Takahisa's eye opened wide in hearing such unexpected words.

Certainly, he can't just open the letter of another person just for his own convenience.

Even more so, that's something akin to a crime——

Certainly, the matter of him accidentally tearing the seal and reading one part of the letter are just act of god.

It definitely is his fault for reading the entire letter after that but——  
Somehow or other, Takahisa isn't making a justification in his heart for it is his own fault.

But, he noticed immediately.

——I-I can't do that. One who opened a letter except for the one to whom those letter addressed to is a criminal ?

When he read the letter addressed to Aki aside, from Kiara trembling, he knew that he already became a criminal by the time he read the letter addressed to Miharu.

"..... AH"

"It seems you understand the weight of your action"

Saying so, Lilyana's letting out a deep sigh.

"No, even so..... It's not like I teared it on purpose"

Takahisa's showing a gloomy expression as if he can't accept that.

He clearly understands that this matter is happening because of his own fault. Because Takahisa didn't think that his action was a crime.

"You definitely will be punished for intentionally opening the seal of the letter. You shouldn't be punished for opening the seal by mistake. But, does Takahisa-sama know that intentionally reading the letter is something that can't be undone in this case ? "

"T-That is....."

It's shown on Takahisa's face when he heard about it from Lilyana's tone which is greatly different from her usual tone.

"You will become the target of punishment if the fact that you intentionally broke the seal and reading the letter is known to the public. At this rate, you'll be undergoing trial as long as Haruto-sama filed a complaint. And there's no other way to prevent that except from asking permission from Haruto-sama"

Takahisa unintentionally gulped his saliva in hearing the statement of Lilyana who's supposed to be his ally.

"Punishment you say, that's too exaggerated huh....."

"Whether it's exaggerated is depending on the will of the victim and the content of the letter..... Since Takahisa-sama's a hero, even if for example Haruto-sama filed a complaint, he basically can't do anything about that "

Maybe because the trial matter to the country is comparable to a hero.

Though this matter might become an issue, they can avoid such judgement with the political situation and in the end Takahisa won't be charged for his crime.

Beside everything will be fine if this matter won't cause any problem, though it's possible to turn the situation in that way if this place was Saint Stellar kingdom, it won't be that easy when such matter happened in Galwark kingdom.

If for example they're facing the trial, maybe it's easier to imagine that it'll turn into them owing a favor toward Galwark kingdom.

Even if it's not turning toward that way, they might have to offer a formal apology to Rio in order to not being charged by him.

"B-But, if it'll turn into something as dangerous as that, no one will ever receive something like a letter of a noble right..... Since it'll bring trouble upon them if they ever make a blunder which caused the letter to be unsealed like now"

Takahisa tried his reasoning.

It might be something cruel to entrust the letter without any sort of explanation, what will happen if the seal of the letter is broken.

*"In the first place, I love Miharuru, isn't he way too bold for entrusting a letter with such content to his rival in love."*

*Though it should be fine if he hands this letter by himself, why did he have to entrust this letter to me.*

In the first place, Miharuru's decided to go with Rio, so she's in love with Rio.

Even if you couldn't hand over the letter since you're in a hurry, you should give the letter yourself.

And yet, he completely failed to understand why Rio entrusted the letters to him as if he's chased by something.

In addition to one matter today, Takahisa feels something close to unjustified resentment toward Rio while recalling the content of the letter.

"Let's go give our apologies toward Haruto-sama. I'll go along to apologize to him too"

Lilyana proposed that plan with a soft voice.

Her tone is completely like inviting a child who just did a naughty thing to reflect on his action.

"No....."

Takahisa's showed a complete rejection toward such a proposal.

Lilyana's suddenly making a whole face smile.

"Well, what are you going to do then ? "

"that's....."

Takahisa's at a loss for words.

If he goes to apologize to Rio, the matter of these letters will be known by Miharu and the others.

What will happen if this letter arrived at Miharu's hands ?

When he imagined what will happen after that——

No good.

Takahisa's showing a strong resistance.

*"I won't allow such a thing to happen."*

*"Absolutely not."*

*"Rio's a killer and a liar after all."*

Rio's the benefactor of Miharu and the others, he was protecting them and taught them survival skills without holding anything back.

Miharu and the others were embracing strong feelings of gratitude toward Rio.



That's why Takahisa also invited Rio to come along.

Since Miharuru will come along with him.

He was kind of aware about the distance between Miharuru and Rio getting closer and closer but, he's not envying that and was trying to hold his own emotion.

And yet, Rio is betraying his feeling.

A killer who is caught in his distorted revenge.

When such a dangerous man is with Miharuru, he won't let such a selfish story to pass by.

There's no way he can bring happiness to Miharuru with his hand which is soaked by the blood of the people killed by him.

He must not let Rio get closer to Miharuru.

"Don't tell me, you're going to hide this fact ? "

Lilyana asked with a slightly grimacing expression.

"That guy is..... Dangerous"

Takahisa's replying with a frown.

Though Lilyana's unable to see through the true meaning behind his words, she knew that Takahisa implicitly accused Haruto.

"Even if I'm working along with Takahisa-sama to hide this fact, someday this matter will come to light. You should understand what will happen by then even without me explaining the risk right ? "

If they were going to hide this fact, they have no choice but to bring back Miharuru and the others to their kingdom before they've any chance to get into a contact with Rio.

But, that's nothing more than stalling the time in their country.

In that case, Miharuru and the others may show a strong resistance if they're trying to forcibly bring them back, even if they managed to cheat Miharuru and the others, they'll know that they were being cheated sooner or later.

Moreover, Charlotte was there to witness when Rio entrusted his letter to

Takahisa, Satsuki also knows that Rio's going to send those letters toward Miharuru and the others.

Satsuki might be aware of the truth if she meets Miharuru and the others later, and it might cause a crack on the alliance with Galwark kingdom who just became their ally.

"Even so..... This is definitely for the sake of Miharuru and the others" Takahisa muttered those words with slight confidence.

"He's showing his sincere attitude toward us, no, he's the one who let Takahisa-sama to reunite with Miharuru and the others. In spite of that, are you going to treat him with such extreme insincerity by hiding the crime that you committed toward him ? "

Lilyana's asking him that question.

Rio put his trust on Takahisa as the older brother of Aki and Masato, and yet, Takahisa was betraying his trust to the point of committing a crime.

Is Rio the one at fault for entrusting his letters to Takahisa, or Takahisa for betraying Rio's trust by reading the content of the letter?.

Which one is it.

"L-Lily..... You're mistaken"

Though the sincere complaints of Lilyana is piercing deep in his mind.

Takahisa thinks of her as someone special when he knows that she's his only ally.

And yet, why can't she understand him, ?

No, Lilyana just doesn't know about it.

About Rio who deceived Miharuru——

"N-No..... You're mistaken. I can't let Miharuru, and the others to meet him"

Takahisa's somehow frantically trying to explain the situation to her.

But, Lilyana's pupils are shaken as if she feels sad and,

"Takahisa-sama, we promised to Haruto-sama. That we'll respect the will of

Miharu and the others. Are you going to betraying that promise too ? "

She asked while staring at Takahisa face.

"Wrong. What will, that will..... Is something that guided by him ! Miharu and the others are tricked by him ! "

"Their will..... Is being guided ? "

Lilyana's reaction also showed a slight change in hearing Takahisa's calm objection.

Naturally she doesn't know the detailed situation unless she asked for Takahisa's explanation.

But, it might have turned into her prying to other people's privacy if she's prying even further into it.

Normally Lilyana will show a smile that is resembling a dignified bloomed flower but, only in this time she's showing a hesitation.

"..... Maybe he'll make their life miserable if they go with him"

Takahisa told her about that while making the content of the letter vague.

Amakawa Haruto is dead in the past.

But, Ayase Miharu is alive in the present.

And yet, that dead man is loving the living woman, there's no way he'll allow it.

She won't be happy.

Death isn't something that can be taken lightly.

Rio's lacking in that awareness.

After all Miharu will be sad if she knows that Haruto is dead, for that Haru-, No, for that Rio to confessing his previous life as Haruto is way too selfish of him.

Takahisa keeps making such a excuse inside of his head.

"Surely. Yeah, I'm sure. He's definitely the one who....."

"Is that the only secret written in this letter ? And will it make Miharu-san

and the others unhappy once they know about it ? "

"Yeah....."

Takahisa consented.

"I see....."

Maybe because no one but the writer knows the intention behind the sentences that he wrote in the letters.

Or maybe because it's depending on the receiver of the letters——

In this case, that is the subjective evaluation for the content of the letter by Takahisa.

That's why, maybe it's not as dangerous as what Takahisa says to her.

Lilyana feels so.

Or, it may be as dangerous as what Takahisa says to her.

If they were unlucky, Miharuru and the others mind, body, and life might be in jeopardy but——

But, even Lilyana couldn't make such judgement unless she read those letters.

"Well, shall we go to Haruto-sama's place to ask for his apology and to ask about his real intention. Whether Haruto-sama really has an ill intention as you say"

They have to apologize to him and even more so to ask about his real intention.

This is not a matter in which she can easily pry into as an outsider.

Because it'll turn into a bad situation in case that Takahisa is wrong.

That was Lilyana conclusion.

"N-NO ! WE ABSOLUTELY MUSTN'T DO THAT ! "

Takahisa's shouting with a pale face.

If we do that, Miharuru will be——

"Is there something that happened in this place ? "

The patrolling knight was coming and asked them that question.

Despite being the hero and royalty of a foreign country, the knight might be suspicious since they have been chatting in the corridor with such a loud voice since a while ago.

"No, there is nothing. Please resume your duty"

"..... Understood. The situation in the castle is currently under strict supervision therefore, please hold back from doing something suspicious"

"Yes , I understand"

Lilyana's replying to him with a smile and then the knight resumed his duty without prying too much into their problem.

"Please don't talk with such a loud voice, Takahisa-sama. Currently all the soldiers in the castle are in a semi-combat state and all of them will be easily agitated. Moreover, Aki-sama will notice your loud voice you know ? "

"S-Sorry. But, we really can't do that. We must not let him approach Miharuru"

"In short..... You have no intention to report about this incident to Haruto-sama nor you want to apologize to him ? "

"..... Sorry"

Takahisa's eye warped due to his guilty feeling.

"The one who should apologize isn't me"

Lilyana's telling him that while heaving a sigh.

"I, I....."

Though Takahisa's trying to say something, he's at a loss for words.

From what, no, speaking of what he had to say.

"He'll be——"

Even so, when Takahisa's trying to explain,

"Please wait. I don't want to know about that for now. Only until I have the permission from the sender or the addressed person of this letter will I hear the content of this letter. Do you know that it'll become a crime if you recklessly

disclose the content of the letters right now? "

Lilyana put a stop to Takahisa.

Takahisa's bewildered.

"In case you won't pass the letters back to Haruto-sama before, can I take that you won't pass this letter to Miharuru-sama even after this? Moreover, I think those matters should be decided by the one who should receive those letters....."

For Takahisa to insist that it's due to the content of the letter, she expected that the content is extremely important in his opinion.

She's judging that Miharuru and the others conclusion may not necessarily coincide with Takahisa's conclusion.

Lilyana persisted to that point of view of hers till the end.

But,

"That's why We can't do that ! "

Takahisa raised his tone while showing a sorrowful expression.

"Takahisa-sama. So I take that you don't want to apologize to Haruto-sama. And you don't want to deliver the letters from Haruto-sama too. Do you think we can do such a convenient action? That letter should be entrusted to you by Haruto-sama right? "

"But, if I'm not doing this ....."

*"Miharuru will go with a killer who is cleverly disguising himself from everyone."*

Takahisa's about to say that but, he can't do that as Lilyana's stopping him from doing so.

*"Why you can't understand? "*

*"Why, aren't you always trusting in what I say?"*

Takahisa's eye is warping as if he is about to cry.

The only thing that dominating over his mind is hatred toward Rio and fear for

snatching away Miharuru and the others.

"Takahisa-sama, you're thinking for the best for Miharuru-san and the others right? In that case will you put your faith in them? For the sake of Miharuru-san and your siblings sake. And then for Haruto-san too since Miharuru-san and the others also trust him. Is what I believe""

Lilyana's speaking in a gentle tone.

"Why can you so easily trust a stranger who you just met?"  
Takahisa asked with a doubtful face.

"Because Miharuru-san and the others trust him. Takahisa-sama's trusting Miharuru-san and the others too right. Because I think that I can put my trust on someone to whom my most important person is believing to. I'm sure that Takahisa-sama is also feeling the same as me....."

He definitely tried to put his trust in Rio, or so until he read the letters.

But now——

"That's....."

Takahisa's averting his eyes from Lilyana as if feeling guilty while swallowing the words that's about to come out.

The girl in front of him is always smiling gently.

But, currently, he can feel a completely different atmosphere from the usual Lilyana.

She's not the gentle, calm and yet innocent Lilyana that he knows about.

The current her was showing an expression of someone who stands above the others as their leader.

"I put my trust in Takahisa-sama. These past three months with you isn't just for show. I know this due to me having met many people as a royalty. You're also inexperienced in that matter but, you're definitely not a bad person"[TL : Char's Counterattack famous quota, definitely a death flag]

"Lily....."

Takahisa couldn't say *"What of me can you understand in just three months"*.

"Isn't that why Haruto-sama entrusted his letters to you, because Miharusan and the others trust Takahisa-sama ?

"That is....."

Takahisa's showing a bitter face.

"Maybe Haruto-sama isn't wholeheartedly trusting me. But, I can feel that he trusts you since you're the older brother of Masato-kun and Aki-chan. And he gave you the chance to be reunited with them is the biggest proof of all"

Lilyana's smiling softly.

Maybe because Miharusan, Satsuki, Aki and Masato also wished for it, Rio also put his trust in Takahisa.

If that is not the case, he won't put his trust to Miharusan and the others including Takahisa, and only trusting himself, Rio will be leaving from Galwark kingdom bringing along Miharusan and the others with him based on his own judgement.

"Will you trust him ? The one to whom your most important people put their trust to"

"....."

Takahisa's at a loss for words while showing a unpleasant expression.

*"Is what he thinks right now really a correct decision ? "*

Though a bud of doubt started to sprout in his heart, he can't forget his agony.

He can't completely erase his complex distrust which is mixing with jealousy toward Rio.

The heart of a person isn't as simple as that.

Maybe because she is guessing Takahisa's confusion.

"Let's go apologize. To Haruto-sama. Let's put our trust in him. For everyone's sake"

Lilyana pressed him to give his answer.



"..... No. .... As expected, we can't do that"

Takahisa replied with a trembling voice.

"..... Takahisa-sama"

Lilyana's saying so with a gloomy expression and then,

"..... In that case, I'll come to visit Haruto-sama to explain the situation to him in your stead. Since everything that transpired today isn't the sole responsibility of Takahisa-sama and Kiara, I have to offer my apology to him too. later on, I won't tell Miharusan and the others about this matter"

She said those words.

"LILY ! "

Takahisa suddenly shouted with a grieved face in hearing the words that he didn't want to hear the most.

He looked at Lilyana with a begging look on his face.

As if saying "Why are you saying something like that?".

"Takahisa-sama, please don't do something like that to me. I want you to tell me what you want from your mouth"

Lilyana's making a sincere appeal.

Takahisa's face warped as if he's being cornered.

Both of them is staring silently for few seconds.

"I-If that's the case....."

Right after that, Takahisa started to speak with a irritated tone.

In the next moment,

"I'll stop being a hero ! And take Miharusan and the others into my custody ! "

Takahisa made that declaration with a frightened expression.

"Wha-....."

As expected, even Lilyana's staring at him with a shocked face due to his shocking declaration.

Silently, even Kiara and Alice are also taken aback in hearing such a conversation.

"Didn't you say that you want to become the hero of our kingdom. .... And then make the kingdom a better place along with me. That vow, was that vow a lie ? "

Lilyana's saying those words with a sad voice.

"It's not a lie ! I don't want to lie to you, nor am I trying to ! Because I just can't do something like that. BUT..... ! "

Takahisa's shouting with a desperate voice.

"I HAVE TO DO THIS. THERE'S NO WAY I CAN LET MIHARU AND THE OTHERS TO GO TO THE SIDE OF SOMEONE WHO CAN KILL WITHOUT BATTLING AN EYELID ! "

A slight tremor is running across Lilyana expression in hearing Takahisa statement.

"——What does he mean by killing someone without batting an eyelid ? "

Lilyana's gazing into Takahisa eyes, a while later.

"I will act as if I never heard your words from before. .... But, is there any feasibility in your statement ? Will you stop being a hero and then take along Miharusan and the others to live with them ? "

She asked.

"I will. No, I definitely will do that"

Takahisa's replying with enthusiastic words.

He's unstable, and dangerous.

Lilyana's judging that the current him will completely have no intention to even reason for whether his thinking is right or wrong.

She doesn't know whether it's possible to make him listen to her even just a little in his current condition since there's a possibility that he might be acting recklessly in his desperation.

"..... Reality is far more cruel than what you might expect, Takahisa-sama. If

for example you choose that option, the time you come to regret that decision won't be that far"

"..... I don't know unless I try" [TL : Rio already mastered that area long time ago]

"the result is as obvious as day even without you trying to do it"

Lilyana mercilessly cut down his remark. [TL : Crush him little girl]

"That won't happen. You know about that too right, Lily. My power as a hero. I can protect my most important people with my power"

"You can't protect someone with only brute power. Though I'm one to say something like this, royalties and nobilities were a being that excel in using their wits. Many will turn into a completely merciless person if it was for their own benefit"

"..... Any more than this will only open the gap between us, Lily. I won't let things go as you say, I won't let Miharuru and the others meet him. If you keep hindering me, I'll take along Miharuru, Aki and Masato to leave with me"

Takahisa is telling her that he won't talk any further than this.

Since he doesn't know when Miharuru and Masato will come back from their stroll.

From this point is the worst, he can feel the unrest to even force them to go along with him.

"Lilyana-sama....."

Kiara and Alice took one step forward when they guessing such heavy atmosphere.

"Please stop this"

Lilyana's restraining both of them.

"Do you really have no intention to step back, Takahisa-sama ? "

"..... Nope. Since I can't protect everyone unless I do this. I will do that so that everyone can live in peace"

Takahisa replied calmly with a extremely distressed face.

Lilyana's showing a troubled face.

"That is..... Of Takahisa-sama"

She stopped what she's about to say in the middle of her sentence.

Since she feels that the relationship with Takahisa that she built up till this point will be completely broken beyond repair once she says those words.

The silence dominated the place as Lilyana's breathing lightly.

"No, so be it right. .... Understood. Let's follow Takahisa-sama's wish"

She muttered those words.

There's a slight tremble in her voice.

Is this really okay to?

Or so, as if she's asking herself—

"Lily....."

Takahisa said so while heaving a sigh.

"But, I have a few conditions. And you must promise me to never go against those conditions. From now on, don't do something like this again ever. In the worst case that Takahisa-sama isn't abiding this condition, I won't back down in delivering the punishment to you. So that you won't regret your actions later on. Will you pick this choice by betting on your life ? "

Lilyana's asking him with a cold voice as if to ask him to make his resolution.

Though Takahisa's pushed by her pressure for a moment,

"..... I'll choose that choice. If that choice will let Miharuru and the others to live in peace"

So he spoke of his vow with a resolute tone.

"Then I'll take your words as your vow. Never make a mistake on your choice"

Lilyana's saying so with a calm tone.

Thereupon, after taking a short breath,

"Well then, since we have not much time left I'll explain the detailed

condition later but, first please let me have the letters. I'll be the one who will dispose of it"

She spoke those words.

"These letters ? "

"Yeah, otherwise how are you going to dispose it ? Since we'll be in trouble if those letters are disposed half-heartedly, I want to be the one who'll dispose it"

Lilyana's replying properly to Takahisa who is asking timidly.

"No, even so....."

"I have the privilege for the matter of disposing the letters as the condition of going along with Takahisa-sama. Please decide it right now, we've no time"

".....understood"

Though Takahisa's somehow showing a hesitant expression, eventually he agreed to give the letters to Lilyana when she pressed for a reply.

Lilyana's giving her cooperation, after all she can't read these letters.

After receiving those letters from Takahisa, Lilyana's giving those letters to Fril who stood quietly by her side.

"You know what you have to do right, Fril ? "

"Yes, my princess ! "

Fril is nodding happily as she keeps those letters.

After Lilyana confirmed that she keeps those letters, she's looking back at Takahisa.

"Takahisa-sama, I'll explain the necessary arrangement. We need the cooperation from one of the three people but, will you persuade one of them ?  
"

" If I'm the one who asking, maybe Aki will....."

Takahisa replied with a slightly matured tone.

"Well then, please go to persuade her"

"O-Okay. I'll try it"

"Best regard. Well then——"



Takahisa returned to the room right after hearing the necessary arrangement from Lilyana.

Since it'll be bad if Miharu and Masato come back when Takahisa is persuading Aki, they'll do that in the bedroom of Lilyana.

"Aki, there's something that I wanted to tell you"

Takahisa's suddenly speaking to her.

Lilyana's also sitting nearby in silence while listening to their conversation with a slightly gloomy expression.

"Uhm..... What's the matter ? "

Maybe because she can somehow feel the heavy atmosphere, Aki's asking with a timid voice.

"The truth is, we decided to leave this kingdom this afternoon"

Takahisa's frankly telling her.

Thereupon, Aki's staring with a dumbfounded expression at her.

"EH ? A-Aren't you going to meet Satsuki-san and Haruto-san in the afternoon ? "

"Sorry. That is impossible"

Takahisa's saying so with a awkward face in seeing Aki being shaken by his words.

"Impossible you say, even though the discussion has yet to be done....."

Aki's showing a troubled expression.

"Well, aren't you going to go with me ? "

Takahisa was going straight to the point with a face as if depending on it.

"O-Of course I'll go with oniichan but....."

Maybe because the direction of the talk is way too absurd, even Aki's confused in how to react to it.

"In that case, can I ask for your help ? "

Takahisa's asking with a impatient face.

"..... What are you going to do about Masato and Miharu-oneechan ? "

Aki's completely unable to understand the flow of the conversation.

Since her brother is always obsessive with going along with everyone and yet, is he going to leave those two in the Galwark kingdom.

Or else, he's going to persuade them after this—— Masato aside, Miharu's clearly stating that she'll go with Rio.

"I'll take them along"

Aki gasped when she heard Takahisa say those words with a resolute tone.

"H-How will you do that ? "

"That's why I want to ask for your cooperation, Aki. Can I ask your help in this matter ? "

"EH ? T-That's impossible"

The diligent Miharu won't easily change her mind once she's made a decision.

Moreover, she doesn't think that she can persuade those two by the afternoon.

"Please ! We've no time left and I have no one but Aki to rely on"

"B-But, even if you say to cooperate, what should I do....."

When seeing Takahisa bowing frantically in front of her, Aki showed the attitude of wanting to cooperate with him in spite of being a little timid about it.

"First, I want to give a greeting to the king along with Lily"

"T-The king ? "

"Yes, since all you have to do is basically be in there"

Takahisa's speaking with affirmation to the confused Aki.

"..... What about Miharu-oneechan and the others ? "

"you've to pack your luggage by telling them "it's because we're going to change our room" when they returned"

"y-you're going to cheat them ? what about Haruto-san and Satsuki-san? "

Aki's asking with flustered voice.

there's no way those two will do nothing when they heard such action.

since they have yet to have a proper discussion.

"..... it's okay. since Satsuki-senpai..... and Haruto-san will definitely come to visit Saint Stellar Kingdom in the near future. we can have a proper discussion during that time"

Takahisa's line of sight moved awkwardly as he replied to that question in a roundabout way.

but with only that, Aki can guess that Satsuki and Haruto isn't involved in this fiasco.

"we can't just leave without saying anything to Haruto-san and Satsuki-san you know. won't that make them worried instead? "

"that's why there's no need to worry since i want Aki to resolve that matter in front of the king. and then, i want you to write letter of agreement for Miharu and Masato"

"such things....."

"i mean i've told Satsuki-senpai and Haruto-san last night that everyone will go with me. so i think they'll believe it as long as Aki write the letters"

"are you..... really saying that ? "

it's a makeshift lie that will be revealed when the afternoon comes but, it definitely be enough to get the consent of Satsuki and Rio.

since their persuasive power will increase by not only using the letter from Aki but also by calmly leaving after giving their greeting to the King.

*"but, this topic is just too absurd, is it really okay to do such a blatant lie?."*

Aki is extremely worried inside.

"Please ! since i can't turn back anymore. but, i hate to be separated like this



even though we finally reunited after such a long time. and yet, i don't even know when we'll be able to meet again!"

Takahisa's making a desperate plea while bowing his head.

"oniichan....."

Aki was at a loss for words seeing her brother lowering his head.

because Aki also doesn't want to get separated from Takahisa.

because she finally reunited with her important family.

moreover, it's because Miharuru is the first love for Takahisa.

it might be love at first sight but, Takahisa is still in love with Miharuru ever since their first meeting.

it doesn't mean that he loves Miharuru only for her appearance, that feeling is definitely inferior to the real thing.

because Aki knows how painful it was for Takahisa.

"..... Understood. fine then. i'll be cooperating with oniichan. as long as it is something that i can do"

Aki unintentionally sent a rescue boat to Takahisa who keeps bowing at her.

though she still has that troubled expression on her face, her declaration to help him is genuine.

"Aki..... ! Thank you very much! "

Takahisa face instantly turned brighter.

"even so, you will properly persuade Haruto-san and Satsuki-san as soon as you meet them again right. since no matter how much you say that you have to return immediately, i think everyone won't give their consent with only those reasons"

Aki's drawing a minimum clearance that he has to do.

"..... yeah, indeed. i think it'll be depending on Haruto-san who has something to do but, i think i'll be able to meet Satsuki-san faster. right, Lily"

saying so, Takahisa's turning his gaze in a slightly awkward manner to Lilyana.

".....Yes. both kingdoms have a relationship but, since it's an alliance it'll be handled with care"

so Lilyana's gave her consent.

"Thank you very much"

Aki's saying her gratitude with a timid voice.

Lilyana's replying with a slightly awkward smile and then,

"well then Takahisa-sama, our time is almost up. now we need to give the necessary explanation....."

she's putting a stop to the conversation.

but, Takahisa then said the following words with a slightly hesitated expression.

"Sorry. one last question. can i ask you one more question, Aki? this is completely unrelated to our conversation from before though....."

"yeah, what is it ? "

Aki's replying while tilting her head.

and then with a slightly hesitated expression,

"do you know about Amakawa Haruto ? "

Takahisa asked that question.

"Eh.....? "

maybe because she just heard an extremely unexpected name in this place, Aki's showing a dumbfounded face.

Lilyana who on Takahisa side's is showing a brief change on her expression.

"the one who Miharuru is in love with. uhm, could it be that his name is Amakawa Haruto? "

Takahisa's timidly asking another question.

thereupon, having come to understand the meaning of that question just now Aki is,

"w-why do you know about that person, oniichan ? "

started to inquiring back as if losing her cool.

her look is a bit, no, her expression is extremely gloomy.

"no, well....."

Takahisa's about to elude her with a astonished face due to how grim Aki's reaction toward that name.

"maybe you heard that name from Miharuno-nee-chan....."

Aki's trying to find the origin of the information.

"no..... i've happened to heard about him long time ago. from father.  
uhm, he was your big brother right ? "

when Takahisa's telling a lie as if deceiving Aki,

"WRONG ! "

was Aki's declaration.

"that guy is not my older brother ! Takahisa-oniichan is my only oniichan,  
case closed stop spouting such nonsense! "

Takahisa trembled in seeing Aki's trembling due to extreme impatience and fright.

though she's just showing a slightly bad attitude just now, that is a completely unexpected reaction from the usual Aki.

maybe that shows how much of a land mine the existence called Amakawa Haruto is to Aki.

Takahisa could sense it in a moment.

while at the same time his self-confidence is overflowing as he feels that not showing those letters to Aki is the correct choice.

Takahisa felt extremely relieved without noticing such a feeling.

"Aki..... i'm sorry.. i just asked a strange question to you. please forgive me"

Takahisa's apologizing.

"ah, yes. i'm sorry.. since i..... also suddenly shouted like that"

Aki suddenly snapped out from her rage and then apologized with a awkward manner.

Lilyana's is staring at the two of them with a dumbfounded face.



afternoon.

after finishing lunch with Charlotte, Rio's heading straight to Miharu's room along with Satsuki.

Fril is waiting in front of their room to let them enter the room.

"we've been waiting. please take your seat"

they're sitting on the chair that was set in the middle of the room along with Takahisa's words.

"where's Miharu's ? "

Satsuki's asking while looking at the room devoid of people's presence.

thereupon, Takahisa's face slightly stiffened at that moment,

"I'm sorry. The truth is, we decided to return to the Saint Stellar kingdom....."

And replied to her.

Rio and Satsuki were staring at him with a dumbfounded face in the next moment.

"Eh ? Is that so? W-Why? "

Satsuki asked him with a confused tone.

"Though I can't say about the detailed matter due to the secrecy issue, it's in fact due to the newly formed defense-alliance....."

Takahisa's replying with a stiff voice.

thereupon, Satsuki showed an expression as if she can't take that matter as it is.

"Secrecy huh....."

"Isn't that completely off the topic if you just come with that explanation?"

Though she doesn't think that he'll tell her what this secret is about if it's actually a national secret.

Satsuki showed a bewildered face.

"..... What are you going to do about Miharu-chan's group ? "

when she regained her composure, Satsuki's asking the most fundamental question.

"They've made their decision to go with me"

Takahisa said those words with a calm tone.

In short— —

"Then..... where's Miharu-chan right now ? "

Satsuki's asking with a impatient tone.

"They're heading ahead toward the magic ship after packing up their luggage"

"such things....."

Satsuki's heart is completely shaken by the sudden development.

*"Meeting aside, are they really going to leave like that without saying anything?"*

*"Were they really going to do that?"*

Certainly, she can feel that Miharu's favor is tilting toward Takahisa in seeing their conversation last night but— —

*"Are they really going to leave without even greeting them?"*

*"Were they really that much in a hurry?"*

So, Satsuki's pondering about such problems.

That was the same case for Rio.

"Even if you say so, that's too sudden....."

Miharu's omitted way too many necessary procedures to the point that they

can't even prepare themselves for that sudden change.

"Why didn't they tell us about this matter beforehand?"

Though she doesn't think that Takahisa's lying, there's not enough evidence to prove that, so she can't decide which one is the truth.

"I'm sorry. Though I'm going to wait till the very limit, we have to prepare the procedure for them to leave the kingdom beforehand"

Maybe because he realized that he's cheating them, Takahisa's apologizing with an awkward tone.

His line of sight is mainly on Satsuki——

"well, my side is also a bit careless in that fact thinking that we've at least a little bit of time....."

Satsuki's speaking in a reluctant tone.

It was decided before that they're going to have a discussion with all members right in this afternoon since yesterday night during the evening party.

That's why the talk about them going back to Saint Stellar kingdom is truly a bolt in the sunny day.

But then, they can at least come to Charlotte's room to inform Rio and Satsuki about those matters, and yet——

Satsuki felt that kind of dissatisfaction.

"I'm sorry. It really is a sudden decision just a while ago which forced us to go back to Saint Stellar kingdom immediately....."

After Takahisa explained in that way,

"..... Is that so ? "

Satsuki asked Lilyana who sat next to Takahisa.

"Yes. An emergency contact just arrived from our kingdom. Since they were going to the noble district after the observation of the magic ship, it'll be just right in the afternoon."

Lilyana added to Takahisa's explanation.

She's somehow showing a troubled expression and then a slightly apologetic expression.

"That was way too sudden right....."

Satsuki's saying so as if sighing.

they almost have no time since its just before the afternoon.

"That's why we came to give our greeting to your majesty Francois and apologize for our sudden decision"

"Aki who finished her packing ahead was the one who has come with us to greet the king. While Miharu and Masato is packing their baggage in the room. Thus, maybe they don't know that senpai's coming"

Takahisa's adding the explanation as if riding over Lilyana's words.

"I-I see....."

Satsuki is muttering with a slightly astonished tone.

Certainly from the story that she heard last night from Takahisa, she knows that Miharu may be choosing to go with him to Saint Stellar kingdom.

But, she expected that she would have at least one more day to have a hearty conversation with Miharu.

Since she also has no intention to force Miharu if that is their answer from the very beginning.

Because she had decided with Rio to respect Miharu's will from the very beginning, which she confirmed again last night with Rio on the way back from Takahisa's room.

That's why she was prepared with the worst possibility of not being able to meet Miharu for a while after this afternoon.

She is a hero but, they might be able to meet again since they're at the same place.

Though she'll be lying if she said that she's not lonely, she knows that they can meet again after bidding their farewell properly, she feels that it won't be this painful for her.

But, as expected if they were suddenly separated in this way——

"I wanted to greet them properly but, I don't know when I will be able to meet them again....."

Satsuki's showing a sullen expression while saying those words.

Though it's not like she's angry, she's still dissatisfied by it.

"In fact, Aki was writing a letter. But, it seems that she couldn't write the important part since she was in a hurry....."

Saying so, Takahisa's taken out the letter at such precise timing.

Certainly, that letter is addressed to Satsuki since there's her name written on the envelope with Aki's penmanship, it's sealed too.

"..... Let me take a look at it"

After receiving the envelope, Satsuki's peeling off the sealing wax.

And then, after taking out the letter inside, she's spreading the letter to read it along with Rio.

Though the content of the letter keeps it's simplicity due to the time, she can feel that it is politely written in Aki's style.

written in that letter was about Miharu's group heading toward Saint Stellar kingdom without saying anything and their reluctance to part with Haruto and Satsuki, she also cleverly mentioned the part of not worrying about them since they're going to meet again soon enough.

Satsuki's eye is moving at a fast pace and after finishing the letter in a dozen seconds,

"Aki-chan....."

She said her name with a slightly bitter tone.

Satsuki's hand is holding that letter as if cherishing it.

But, she tilted her head a while later as if noticing something.

"But, is this letter..... Written for me ? "

And muttered so.



Though Satsuki's name is written on it, the name of Rio—— Or rather, Haruto wasn't written in it at all.

"Yes. Though she's trying to write two letter for both of you, she's running out of time..... But, she left a message for Haruto-san"

Takahisa's saying so with a slightly stiff smile.

"A message huh"

Rio muttered silently.

"Yes. Uhm, since this is also the matter regarding the content of the letter, can we talk with just the two of us? "

So Takahisa's proposing that in a reserved manner.

Rio is glancing at Lilyana who seems to know about this matter.

On the other hand, Satsuki's showing a confused expression as she is unable to understand the flow of the conversation.

"My apologies for asking this, does the two of you know about the content of the letter? "

"..... Lily knows nothing about it"

When Rio's asking, Takahisa is answering so while shaking his head in denial.

"I see. Then, may I confirm about one thing in this place? "

So Rio said.

Thereupon, Takahisa shoulder is trembling lightly.

Surely, Rio didn't want Satsuki to hear this story.

Since it'll be slightly inconvenient for Takahisa if Satsuki knows about this.

Since this will turn into a messy situation if Satsuki meets Miharuru again later in the future.

In the first place, he doesn't want her to know the matter of Rio sending those letters which is addressed to Miharuru's group.

But, he couldn't hide those facts unnaturally either.

"Yes, may I know what it is? "

Takahisa's gulping his saliva as he asking that.

He's wondering what is the thing that Rio wants to confirm about.

He can feel the increase of his heartbeat.

"Have the three of them read those letters properly ? "

Rio asked while his gaze bored deeply into Takahisa's eye.

It's not only Lilyana by their side, there is also Satsuki.

If it was a "no", he might not be able to explain afterward.

But, he has no choice but to answer with a "yes".

He's a bit realistic even considering their reaction when reading those letters.

While pondering about those matters, Takahisa recalled Aki's reaction when he mentioned Amakawa Haruto's name.

"Yes..... I'm astonished. Especially in Aki case..... She was..... Completely lost her temper..... "

Takahisa's replying awkwardly with a stiff voice.

"I see....."

Rio said so as if understanding what he means.

Though Satsuki can't guess the core of the matter as of now, it seems she knows that Rio's sending a letter to Miharuru's group, so she just listened silently.

"..... Do you know what kind of expression Aki made after you gave the letter to her ? "

In seeing Rio's reaction, Takahisa unintentionally asked with a sullen face.

"Yeah, I can guess it somehow"

Rio's nodding while replying with a frail smile.

That smile reflected the clear cruelty.

It's not just for Takahisa, even Lilyana gasped by his smile.

She expected that maybe Rio is also somehow aware of Aki's reaction.

Since he knew that Aki showed a reaction that he expected after receiving the

letter.

That's all to it.

Even so, he considered it to be known to her.

"....."

Takahisa was exasperated to Rio's cool state in hearing him answer without even trying to hide it.

Now he surely feels the unpleasant feeling that's gushing out from the depth of his heart.

*"Maybe——"*

*No, there's no doubt about it——"*

*"It's not something like theory anymore, this man is definitely not how he appears to be".*

Takahisa felt so.

"Well then, is it okay to hear the message ? "

So Rio asked to him.

"Yes..... Well then, shall we go to that room"

Thus, Rio and Takahisa were changing their location to the separated room.  
[TL : the raw say bedroom, but that will made those fujoshi on fire instead]

☆☆☆☆☆☆

This place was the room where Takahisa was staying at till yesterday.

"Masato aside, Miharuru and Aki don't want to meet you again"

When it is just him and Rio alone, Takahisa said those words to Rio with a stiff voice.

It was a cold hearted tone without holding back.

But, Rio was convinced with just that much.

Since Miharuru and co have nothing but one or two reasons for not wanting to meet him.

First they don't want to meet him, second is that they can't meet him.

The natural situation was set on the table for the former case after he bid their farewell to the king of the kingdom where they were staying at with Aki's cooperation and then gave her farewell letter to Satsuki.

In addition, he also compensated it with a authentic situation of a real reaction from Aki when she heard the question from Takahisa.

"I see....."

Rio heaved a sigh while showing a gloomy smile.

After that, he's locking his gaze at Takahisa.

"Can I ask something ? "

And then asked to him.

"Yes"

Takahisa's nodding as he answered with a heavy voice.

"Are you going out with Miharu-san ? "

Takahisa's staring at Rio with a surprised expression when he asked so.

Because he never expected Rio to see him and Miharu in that way.

Takahisa's trembling lightly but,

"..... That's right. We're going out"

When he noticed, he already answered Rio's question.

"I see..... Did you hear about that matter from Miharu-san during the evening party last night ? "

"..... I just confessed my love to her"

Rio replied with a disappointed tone.

"My apologies. My heart just can't calm down when I hear that a man is trying to court her, isn't it ? "

"No, well....."

Takahisa's replying with a frown on his face.

"Though I shouldn't be the one who says this, please take care of Miharusan and co"

"..... Of course. I'll be the one who protects the three of them from now on"

Takahisa's saying those words loud and clear while trying to repress his inner feelings.

"Best regards then"

Rio bowed his head as he said those words with a polite tone.

"..... You....."

Takahisa's tone raised an octave as if getting irritated in seeing Rio who is not agitated even to the last moment.

*"Why are you giving up so easily?"*

*"Where is your pride?"*

*"You love Miharusan, right?"*

*"What in the hell did you want to do, it becomes even more confusing when you act like a saint?"*

It's okay even if you say just one rebuttal, and yet—

*"This is just too cowardly".*

But,

"AH....."

Takahisa swallowed his words as he noticed Rio's fist grasping tightly.

He knows that Rio is suppressing his own feeling.

Thereupon, now he can push aside his sense of guilt.

Takahisa's averting his gaze awkwardly.

"Well, that's all of it....."

So he tried to end their conversation.

"Has Miharusan not said anything ? "

But, Rio's still asking.

"..... I'm sorry"

"So that's the case..... Well then, thank you very much. See you again"

Rio then leaving the room with Takahisa standing still behind him as if feeling guilty of something.

They then finished bidding their farewell which took no more than a few minutes, and then Takahisa and co left the castle in hurry.



When looking at Takahisa and co who's running toward the castle gate in a hurry to return to their kingdom,

"Are you really not going to see them off ? "

Rio was standing beside Satsuki.

"Yeah. Well, I can't go beyond this point due to those formalities. Maybe it'll be too late even if I get the permission right now"

"I see"

Rio is nodding, and then silence is descending upon them for a while.

"..... Hey, it should be okay right ? "

Satsuki asked him that with timid tone.

"Whether it's good or bad, it's their own desire to go with Takahisa right"  
Rio's shrugging his shoulders as he said so.

"Certainly but, must we separate like this without even bidding our farewell with them properly ? To be honest, something is....."

Satsuki showed a dissatisfied expression.

In any way, the event just developed too rapidly.

It's exactly like they just saw the ending while skipping the necessary process toward it——

It's as if they only know the answer while omitting the whole process of solving the problem——

it would only cause an unspeakable indigestion.

Maybe if one were to think, that just how much something like reality is.

But, she definitely couldn't accept such an end which omitted the procedure that should be treaded on.

No matter how much she was promised to meet them again.

"Tell me, what is this highly secret information of the kingdom ? "

Satsuki is making a completely puzzled face.

It doesn't seem to be true as they just gave bare minimum explanation and then left quickly.

Since she should be having a pleasant conversation with Miharuru around this time.

Satsuki sighed in anxiety.

"Aren't you going to meet them again"

Rio said so as if to sooth Satsuki.

Thereupon, Satsuki fell into a short silence as if pondering on her own.

Suddenly, 、

"..... I'VE DECIDED ! I, AM GOING TO PURSUE MIHARU-CHAN  
IMMEDIATELY ! I'M GOING TO SEE THE KING"

Satsuki declared so as she made her decision.

Surely, Miharuru will also be bewildered by such a absurd situation.

She just can't sit by when she doesn't even know the situation of the other party.

She can accept it if they told their decision to her by themselves.

When it comes to that, the matter is simple.

"Say Haruto-kun, how about going with me ! Isn't it painful if things are kept hazy in this way"

So, Satsuki is suggesting to Rio.

But, Rio's gently shaking his head in denial and,

"I'm sorry. I can't go with you"

Answered with a calm tone.

Satsuki is taken aback when her expectation was betrayed.

"W-Why ? You must be worrying about Miharu-chan right ? "

Satsuki asked with a strong tone.

She's looking at him with a dissatisfied look.

"..... Because I have some private matter that I have to finish"

Rio replied with a roundabout answer without telling her the truth.

"Is that the matter that you said last night ? ..... It's something that you have no choice but to do in the western region "

"Yeah, since it's a promise with my acquaintance. I can't delay it any longer"

"Then, it's okay after your done with your business right. It's okay even if you are not with me. So let's go"

Satsuki is pressing even further as her head pushed on Rio's chest.

"..... But, I think it's better for everyone to not meet me again"

Rio said those words with a lonely smile on his face.

His smile is showing more persuasive power than his words. ㄷ

"W-What is this ? That should....."

To Satsuki who is asking with a bewildered voice,

"I'm rejected. By Miharu-san. I confessed my love to her you see"

Rio told of such a fact without any hesitation.

"Eh.....? "

Satsuki face is frozen in that instant.

But, Rio kept going on with his words without even noticing the change on her face.



"They're going out you see. Takahisa-san and Miharu-san. Did you know about this ? "

"EH—A~H— U-Uhn. I thought that they were going out since it seems there's a rumor about that since the middle school but....."

The bewildered Satsuki replied to him with a shrill voice.

"As I thought"

If Satsuki said so, then there's no doubt about it.

There's no way Miharu will receive Rio's confession since she's already going out with Takahisa.

Might be something like that.

"The match has been decided even before I confessed my love, I tried to not think about that but, it seems the victor was already decided from the very beginning right"

Rio's lips twisting a bit as if mocking his own foolish action.

He faintly noticed this fact when he heard about the story regarding Takahisa from Miharu last night.

He tried to confess his love but, he's too late.

No, since he thought that they were already going out since his previous life.

The matter of Amakawa Haruto couldn't confess his love to Miharu has always become the source of his regret.

That's why, even if Miharu's already going out with Takahisa, Haruto who was alive in him decided to confess his love.

This feeling never changed even after he became Rio.

But.

If his previous life has to be frank, he still believed that maybe he still has the chance even if it's just one in millions.

So he wanted to confess his love as soon as possible.

He had to hurry.

Because he noticed that it'll be too late if they were to have a conversation this afternoon.

So, being stirred by that thought— —

Rio became impatient.

That's why he wanted to send those letters no matter what before being separated from Miharuru.

"It's really hard right. To confess your love to someone"

His voice was filled with his tiredness.

When he thought of this and that process which existed in theory, its usefulness in reality is at minimum.

Which then came to the current situation, it's become hard for him to think calmly with such strain in his mind.

The best he can do is only smoothing over the surface.

"Haruto-kun....."

Satsuki called to Rio as if to console him.

"I'm sorry for saying such strange things"

Rio's apologizing as he smiled calmly at her. But, his fists are claspingso hard.

"Come to think of it, I didn't say it to Satsuki-san right. I have to explain it properly to you"

If she were to meet Miharuru later, it may be better to let her know about his circumstances.

That's why Rio decided to tell Satsuki about his past.

"About me in my previous life— —"



Rio was meeting with Francois Galwark in the king's office.

Francois is sitting on the splendid chair which is located at the head of the seat with his royal knight which is at the prime of his life right by his side.

Rio's sitting on the lower seat along with who knows how many young royal

knights.

"Your majesty, I'm extremely grateful for your gift during these occasion"

Rio's addressing to Francois.

"Yeah. You may come frequently. It seems that Charlotte is extremely indebted to you"

Francois said those words while smiling pleasantly.

"It's my graciousness but, I'm the one who receiving special favor from Charlotte-sama"

"Hahaha, even Satsuki-dono become quite close to you isn't it. It's okay as long as you come to visit frequently to have some pleasantries with them from now on"

"Ha. Though this one is unworthy of such honor, if that is what they are wishing for....."

And then, while he is replying as courtesies,

(Maybe this king is the one who ordered Charlotte to make her move)

Rio was guessing Francois's plan.

Since it's practically a disrespect to say his real thought here, the answer is something that only the king who sits in front of him knows but, there's something that's puzzling for him.

Currently, Rio has officially became part of Galwark kingdom after becoming a honorary knight.

Maybe that is just how the scenario of Galwark kingdom to bind Satsuki by using the relationship between Satsuki and Rio——

That may be the reason why Charlotte is receiving an order from Francois to approach Satsuki and Rio——

When he thinks about it now, maybe it was around the time when Christhardt and Charlotte are approaching him with friendly manner during the second night of the evening party.

Though Christhardt didn't even think that Satsuki and Rio will dance together

on the first day of the evening party.

In addition to the monitoring eyes, he considered the possibilities of other things prepared from behind the scene.

The official stance was to respect their will but, it's a bit of a surprise when he easily surrendered the matter regarding Miharu's, there's a possibilities of backdoor deals in regard to defense alliance during that time frame with Lilyana.

"As expected, this person is quite a hypocrite", was what Rio felt about Francois.

Thus, due to this reason he's quite surprised since he didn't want to be that close to royalties and nobilities.

Even if he acts within safety limit as to not cause anything, when the royalties and nobilities noticed his utility value, thus he moved while expecting that.

Though the young nobilities in their teens like Stead and Alphonse tended to put too much trust in the authorities given to them, those tendencies will slowly diminish as they're entering their twenties and thirties.

The first class royalties and nobilities were cunning people who make their move without anyone noticing about their preparation.

And then to win in term of cleverness from someone who has utility value by the time the person noticed that there's an expectation place to him, most of the case, it's already too late.

Since most of their trick is by coming calmly from the front with a smile on their face and wanting to do handshake with right hand while hiding a knife with their left hand.

"Well then, I wonder what is your business for coming today ? "

Whether he can guess Rio's intention or not, Francois is addressing him with a haughty speech.

It's not like it'll change something if Rio muttered one of his grudge here.

Rather, it'll cause him even more unwanted trouble for picking a fight with the king.

"I came to present an item to express my gratitude for my investiture as a honorary knight. And using this occasion, I'm also going to report my family name"

So, Rio is starting to tell Francois about his business while putting an insincere smile on his face.

"Hou. So you already have a name in your mind but, what is the item in your hand ? "

"Ha. Since I heard that your majesty is someone who loves liquor, I brought a liquor which I'm bringing along from the Yagumo region. Though I'm worrying about whether it's according to your palate, since it's currently not in the market, the matter of this one as an extremely rare item is guaranteed"

When Rio said so, curious light ignited inside of Francois's eyes.

"Hou. You're extremely prepared aren't you. I will enjoy the taste"

"I beg for your pardon. In fact, I already made an arrangement for Liselotte-sama who has Rikka firm to manage the circulation of this item, if this item is to your taste, you might be able to get one in your hand with that connection"

"I see. I see, it made me even more curious if Liselotte is the one who is managing the circulation of this liquor. Now I'm even more excited since I can drink this one even before it is sold in the market. I'm going to enjoy it soon"

"It's my pleasure if it's to your liking"

The liquor that Rio presented to Francois right now is a liquor that is made by Rio himself by using the sake brewing knowledge of Karasuki kingdom and the brewing knowledge of Seirei no Tami.

That's why it's definitely not a lie when he said that it's a liquor from the Yagumo region.

"Yeah. Then, may I hear what is your family name ? "

After nodding in exaggerated manner, Francois then looking at Rio.

Family name is playing an important role and it should even be called as the face of the noble.

So far, Rio has been using Haruto as his alias.

Though he held a faint antipathy at using the name of a dead person at first, everything might be alright if he is using that name as an alias.

Though he can't stop the flow of events in which he is receiving a peerage with an alias even if he wants to stop it, it may not be a really desirable situation.

But, in case his reported name is being approved by Francois, Haruto's name, along with his family name won't be treated as an alias and become a common name.

And then, when he's going to decide what his family name will be, one candidate appeared right in his mind.

But, is it really okay to use that name.

Even Rio was worrying about it.

Because he gets the feeling that it'll be similar to resurrecting the dead if he's calling himself with that name.

Because he didn't have such self-confidence with such identity swing since maybe Amakawa Haruto wasn't his support and nothing more than memories that lost his body.

But, maybe it's not something that he has to ponder too hard about since he can finally move on a bit after confessing his love to Miharuru and write those letters to her.

Because he thinks that the most important thing is not who are you, it's his feeling that matters.

That's why, Rio will call himself.

"Amakawa——"

Francois's eye opened wide when Rio told his name with short words that he isn't used to hearing.

"From today onward, I will call myself Haruto Amakawa" [TL : In Japanese it'll be "Amakawa Haruto" while in English it'll be "Haruto Amakawa"]

So he is following his previous short word with the resolute tone in the next sentence.

Francois is squinting his eyes as he stared at Rio.

A while later, a smile is forming on his lips and then,

"It's decided then. O Haruto, in the name of Francois, the king of Galwark, hereby I officially approved your family name as "Amakawa""

Francois gave his permission for Rio to use Amakawa as his family name.

"Thank you very much. Your majesty"

Rio's bowing his head in silent.

Year 1000 of Sacred Calendar, a certain day in spring season.

From this day onward, Rio become a honorary knight of Galwark kingdom both in name and reality.

It was the moment of the birth of the black knight, Haruto Amakawa.

# Chapter 112: The Day of Departure

"So then, have you decided on your next course of action?"

After Francois granted Rio the right to a family name as Haruto Amakawa, he asked about the latter's plans.

"I'm going to head west."

When he answered, Francois paused, muttering under his breath.

"I see. You were originally active in the outskirts of Almond before this, no?"

"Yes, that's correct."

"If you're going to pass through Duke Kretia's territory on the way, you should pay a short visit to the home of Cedric. I heard that you and Liselotte came to the capital together by magic ship."

The distance between Almond and the Galwark kingdom's capital was a few hours at most, even with the most common magic ship.

Taking the highway by foot, it would be around a fortnight.

In Rio's case, however, he can fly alone much faster than a magic ship, but there's no way Francois knew about that.

"My deepest gratitude for your consideration."

"I mentioned before that it's fine as long as you return on occasion to see Charlotte and Satsuki-dono. I'm sure they'll both miss you."

Francois spoke their names as if to emphasize it.

"I understand. I'll do my best to visit once in a while."

Holding back a strained sigh, Rio answered his request courteously.



Some time before the meeting between Francois and Rio, there were three magic ships owned by the Saint Stella kingdom anchored on the Galwark capital's east harbor.

The knights were extremely nervous, taking every precaution so to not miss any sign of intruders entering the ship after Takahisa and Liliana boarded.



Among the two-man pairs on patrol were Alice and Kiara.

"Alice, have there been any abnormal reactions around or inside the ship?"  
"No~ne. If there was, I would have told you as soon as I noticed."

Although Kiara's voice was tense, Alice remained nonchalant as ever.

"You're the only one on board with the ability to perceive magical power. I won't let you miss it a second time, so please stay focused."

"Got it~. But come on, don't you think you're overworking me here? I deserve some rest by now."

Her attitude aside, it was extremely difficult for someone without a good plan to creep onto the magic ship.

Naturally there were the knights keeping watch with their eyes and ears, but Alice was vigilant for the use of any magic or magic tools.

There's two necessary skills to use magic. Those are the manipulation and perception of magical power, referred to as *odo* by the *Seirei no Tami*.

Though it's possible for humans who can use magic to perceive *odo*, in any normal case they only feel the fixed amount being used for spellcasting. They can't feel the loose magic drifting in the air.

To say nothing of changing the phenomenon, it's impossible to discern the true nature of the magical energy with the naked eye.

This sort of high level sensory ability and perception is extremely useful for detecting abnormalities in magical power, and indispensable for learning spirit arts.

Since magic used by humans doesn't strictly demand the ability to sense pure magical power, they don't have the know-how needed to train that ability efficiently.

Of course, it's also possible for a human to learn spirit arts after dedicated training, but it's not a widespread discipline in the *Strahl* region.

The discipline they refer to as magic became widespread in the region thanks to its ease of use, so the high-demand spirit arts faded into obscurity.

Then there are those rare cases of a genius having a high affinity for spirit arts among humans. Such an exceptional human would be able to sense *odo* with high precision from little training.

Rio, who was able to learn spirit arts far more quickly than any normal human, and can even skip many of the steps involved in use, could be considered the rarest of the rare. However, Alice isn't all that far from his level.

Many spies and assassins often use strange magic and tools. As a result, a natural-born prodigy like Alice is particularly precious as an escort—a living national treasure.

There are occasions where one is clever enough to use the absolute minimum required power, enough so that they can remain undetected up to the point of contact with their target. But for anyone careless enough to use spirit arts or magic within Alice's range, she'd catch it without fail.

Her exceptional talent matured at a very young age, so it was quickly decided that she be raised as a royal knight for the princess. Despite being the eldest daughter, her ability in service to Liliana couldn't be overlooked.



"But, we're on top of a lake, aren't we?"

Miharu muttered those words.

"Isn't this tremor coming from the ship itself?"

"... Maybe. How are you feeling?"

Miharu answered Masato's question with one of her own, but before he could answer the trembling grew stronger. The ship seemed to be on the move.

"Wa—the ship! Is it moving?"

Masato looked around the salon as he stabilized himself, but unfortunately there weren't any windows to look outside.

"Um, it looks like it. Did Takahisa-kun board already?"

The sightseeing flight on the ship was to wait for Takahisa to return, so she thought it would begin when he did.

"Aw, come on, I wanted to be on the deck when we took off."

As Masato grumbled his dissatisfaction, the burden of gravity slowly lessened on them.

"Ah—whoa, this feels kinda weird. Let's try taking a peek outside."

Masato headed toward the salon's door, interrupted by Aki.

"W-wait! Masato, you can't!"

And suddenly the door flung open, Takahisa on the other side.

"What's up, Aniki? Let me go to the deck when we're leaving,"

"My bad. There's something I wanted to talk about. Will you sit back down for now?"

"But we're already in the air, aren't we? I wanted to finish looking around soon."

"There won't be any tour. We're heading to Saint Stella kingdom right now."

For some reason, Takahisa's voice was stone cold.

Although Masato looked restless, he was completely dumbfounded. He couldn't understand what his brother just said, and couldn't say anything himself.

Next to him, Miharuru was just as perplexed, only muttering in response.

"Eh?"

"What are you saying?"

"I decided to return to our country. This ship is currently heading toward Saint Stella kingdom. Everyone was supposed to come with me."

"Hold up, I don't get this. What are you talking about?"

Masato frowned at him with suspicion.

"That's why I'm about to explain. Can we sit down first? Let's have lunch while we talk."



After everyone gathered at a dining table in the salon, a warm meal was immediately served to them.

On the menu was a white stew made with Galwark native calf, fresh-baked bread, sautéed mushroom, omelette and a colorful salad.

The aroma tickled at Masato's nose and roused his stomach.

He had a lot of questions he wanted to ask, but he felt like it would have been wasteful to let his food cool. Thus, Masato promptly stretched his arms to begin devouring his slightly delayed lunch.

Frankly, it was so Masato-like that Miharuru couldn't help but crack a smile at the

boy who never once beat his stomach in a battle of attrition.

She thought it would be fine to start the conversation herself, but she hesitated to really do it, so Masato got ahead of her.

"So then, Send... Santo—"

"Saint Stella kingdom."

In the end, Miharu still ended up correcting him.

"Yeah. Why are we going to Saint Stella kingdom? What happened to Haruto-anchan, and Satsuki-oneechan? Are they on board?"

Masato threw a barrage of questions at Takahisa in between greedy gulps of bread.

"They're not on the ship. They'll visit Saint Stella in the future."

"H-Haah? I didn't hear about this!"

"Weren't we going to meet with Haruto-san this afternoon? You promised, didn't you?"

Miharu asked with a look of confusion, Masato's head spinning trying to follow along, and Takahisa desperately endured the urge to grimace.

"I'm sorry. That became impossible. That's why we're heading to Saint Stella now."

"Eh?"

Miharu froze stiff for a moment.

"Th—That's a lie! YOU'RE LYING, AREN'T YOU?!"

She completely lost her composure.

"Why? Why is the ship taking us to Saint Stella kingdom? Tell me why!"

"M-Miharu-oneechan, what's the matter?"

Aki couldn't keep in her shock, having never seen Miharu blow up before. Masato was stunned, as well.

She sat back in her chair, body tense.

— — *This shouldn't be happening, so when did it come to this?*

That was the only question on her mind.

Miharu's brain was on overdrive the night before. She didn't even get a moment's rest.

Or more accurately, it had been on her mind until just a few minutes ago.

The chance that Haruto might be Amakawa Haruto.

What if it was the truth? What would she do?

She wanted to know the truth. No, without exception, she had to know.

Still, Haruto showed various sides of himself, and sometimes she caught the sight of something so cruel it overwhelmed her——

When she thought the truth may not be as she imagined... when she thought the time finally came for her to learn the answers to her questions... she was scared, wanted to run from it——

She tried to settle herself, even just a little bit, before she met with Haruto, but for all the preparation she did her mind was slowly crumbling.

She was afraid to leave the ship to see Haruto, but at the same time she was brimming with anticipation to speak with him.

Her heart throbbed so heavily it hurt, and only more as the time to meet him again crept closer.

She never expected him to prefer doing something else.

"It has to be a lie. This kind of thing... THIS SHOULDN'T BE HAPPENING!"

Haruto confessed his love to her.

He said there was something he wanted to give her.

She didn't think he would end up going somewhere else before then.

Miharu was assaulted by indescribable anxiety.

"It's the truth."

When Takahisa spoke, a shiver ran down Miharu's spine.

Only a moment's hesitation flickered in her eyes.

"... I have to leave."

"Eh?"

Aki tilted her head as Miharu stood up and ran for the door.

"Huh—Miharu-oneechan! Wait! Where are you going?!"

Aki scrambled after her, managing to grab Miharu's arm when she opened

the door.

Nobody could understand why Miharuru was acting so out of character.

"Let go of me! Please! I have to get off this ship!"

"Y-You can't! It's flying you know!"

"I still have something to do there! Where Haruto-san is! So, why did it turn out like this without any explanation?!"

Though she clearly wasn't happy with what was happening, Aki refused to release her.

"She's right, Aniki. Please explain what's going on right now. And if we're not satisfied with the reason, please send us back immediately."

Masato composed himself and agreed with Miharuru.

"It's alright. You'll be able to meet again. I've discussed it with Satsuki-senpai, and she approves as well."

Maybe because he expected Miharuru's reaction, Takahisa could reply without skipping a beat. And not just Masato, even Miharuru turned around to listen. Although, in Miharuru's case, there was a strangely threatening glint in her eyes.

"If that's so, then why are you hiding all this from us?"

"... I'm sorry. It's my fault for keeping this matter a secret from you. We have a pressing issue ahead of us, so we didn't have enough time to tell you."

"If you're in a hurry, why are you forcing us to go with you? We can't even say goodbye to Satsuki-neechan and Haruto-anchan."

"... I'm sorry. I didn't want to be away from anyone."

Masato clicked his tongue at Takahisa's apologies.

"I wonder if you're just trying to wear us down saying stuff like that... but there's an order for this kind of thing, right?"

"I'm really sorry."

Takahisa's stiffened bitterly, knowing Masato was making a sound argument.

"Ah-I decided to go along after talking about it with Oniichan!"

Unable to watch any longer, Aki forced her way in.

"Why is Aki-neechan involved in this too...?"

"I was the one who asked her. I'm an older brother. I should have been the one who protected you all. I couldn't bear staying separated from you and letting you live in a world like this with such poor public safety."

"He's right. Why should we be torn apart again when we're finally back together?"

Aki immediately covered for Takahisa, who finally stopped lying about what he really wanted. Masato was still pouting in discontent, though.

"That's, that's right, but..."

He didn't want to be separated from his brother either. They had their quarrel yesterday, but Masato was trying to think of a better solution the entire time.

"Maybe it's impossible for Satsuki-neechan, but why couldn't Haruto-anchan come with us?"

He wanted to know what Haruto had to say on the matter.

"I tried to invite him... But he refused. He said there was something he had to do, no matter what."

Masato and Miharu's eyes widened hearing that. After all, Haruto himself told them the same thing.

"It seems he's going back to Almond soon. But he'll come visit after finishing his business, right, Oniichan? And Satsuki-san, too."

And hoping to not see Takahisa lose any more face, she added on to his explanation from what she already heard.

"Yeah. Satsuki-senpai would take some preparing, but as long as the Galwark kingdom grants permission she can come meet us. As for Haruto-san... I don't know how long it'll take for him to finish his business."

"Haruto-san is..."

Miharu spoke like she was wringing her voice out.

"Haruto-san really didn't say anything?"

"... He said, 'Best regards to everyone.'"

"Anything else?"

"Let's... "Let's meet again.'"

Pushed along by Miharu's desperation, Takahisa said whatever came to mind. He immediately regretted saying something so half-baked.

"... I'm going."

"Eh?"

Takahisa couldn't understand what Miharu was muttering.

"I have to go. I need to go to where Haruto-san is."

"That's impossible, this ship is flying at a hundred kilometers an hour."

Takahisa tried to convince her to abandon the idea, but Miharu wasn't having any of it, pleading with him in a shaking voice.

"Takahisa-kun, please. Please turn the ship around or let me leave."

"I'm sorry. I can't do that."

He shook his head in denial, wearing a sullen expression.

"W-Why?"

"I don't want you to leave. I don't want to have to separate from you. I want to be the one who protects you."

Takahisa stated it plainly. In a way, this was a confession of sorts.

"I... I never asked you to do that!"

She rarely expressed her opinion so aggressively, giving Aki and Masato a shock. Even Takahisa faltered for a moment.

Regardless, his determination didn't waver.

"But in reality, if Haruto-san didn't protect you, you wouldn't have survived this far, right? Can you manage to live on your own in this kind of world?"

"That's..."

He was right.

Unless she was protected, the Miharu as she was now didn't stand a chance.

"Not just Miharu, but Aki and Masato also need to be protected by someone. Don't you think so?"

"Yeah, but..."



"I want to be the one who protects you. Can't I?"

He was trying to force out a yes or no.

"Whether you can or not isn't the problem, Takahisa-kun. I..."

Miharu was trying to express it to him, but she was so irritated she couldn't find the words.

"Is there a reason why I'm not good enough compared to Haruto-san?"

"I have a debt to Haruto-san..."

"He doesn't seem to feel the same. He even refused the reward for protecting you all, whether it was from Galwark or Saint Stella kingdom. Doesn't he want you to not be bound by any favors?"

"... It's not like I'm "bound" by it. Even without it, I want to stay with Haruto-san."

Wanting to be with him.

Those were the words she was looking for.

On the other hand, Takahisa seemed broken by what he just heard.

"Is it because you love him?"

"That has nothing to do with my decision..."

Miharu looked like she was about to tear up.

"Then why?"

"Why..."

She didn't know the answer herself.

The likelihood that Haruto was her childhood friend?

Or simply that she wanted to know about his past life?

That might have had something to do with it.

But Miharu probably would have wanted to stay with Haruto even if he wasn't Amakawa Haruto.

That's what she chose to do from the start.

"Maybe we'll go back to Earth someday. You know what I mean, right? Don't tell me you have no intention of returning. Isn't there something you still want to do back there?"

"I... I don't know."

"Eh?"

He had been talking frantically, but Miharu's muttering stopped Takahisa cold.

"I don't know if I'll go back or not. But I don't care... I don't even know what's going to happen next, or in the future."

Takahisa was left dumbfounded at her rejection, while Aki and Masato clearly didn't want to be in the room anymore.

"... Nevertheless, we're unable to turn the ship around. You should think about it until Satsuki-senpai comes to visit. We'll talk again after that."

After a long and tense pause, Takahisa mustered an end to the conversation. He stood from his seat and moved for the door.

"Takahisa-kun!"

Miharu's voice echoed off the walls. Takahisa loosened for a moment, but shook off his hesitation as he grabbed the handle and left the room.

"Takahisa-sama."

After leaving the salon, Liliana, along with her maid Fril and knight Hilda, followed after him.

"Lily..."

Liliana stared him straight in the face without a word, an awkward look in Takahisa's eyes.

"Can you prepare rooms for three people when we get back to the kingdom?"

"Of course."

"Please do so, then. I want to be alone for a while."

Takahisa hurried off, as if he was afraid someone would call him back.



After having left Francois' office and making a quick trip to her room, Satsuki waited for Rio in his.

She sat in her chair with her eyes closed, ignoring the maid in the room and

quietly sipping from a cup of tea with a pensive look on her face. She was wearing cloth armor styled like a dress, with basic white fabric and black embroidery.

"Satsuki-san, so you were here."

When Rio called her name, he gave her an earnest smile.

"Welcome back. I've been waiting for you."

"Yeah... I'm back."

He had a short conversation with Satsuki before he went to speak with Francois.

Since then, the atmosphere had been pretty heavy.

"I'd like to go somewhere with you for a while. Is now fine?"

"Sure, I don't mind."

"It's decided then. Come with me."

And so, Rio followed Satsuki back out of the room.



Let's rewind a bit.

After seeing off Takahisa at the castle gate, Rio invited Satsuki to his room to give her something.

Whereas Satsuki's room was located in one of the castle spires, Rio's room was closer to the ground and easier to reach.

The walls of the castle's lower floors were extremely thick, so the window panels were quite small. A bit of sunlight could get in, but ultimately lighting was provided via magic tool.

Rio and Satsuki took seats across from each other in the living room.

"Let's start right away. Could you tell me about the previous life you were talking about at the gate?"

Without any beating around the bush, Rio nodded and got to explaining.

"My previous life was in Japan. My name was Amakawa Haruto."

"Amakawa... Haruto? Isn't that your name now?"

"It's not my real name in this world. My real name is Rio."

Satsuki tilted her head.

"A bit... strange, for an alias. Why use the name of your last life?"

"I'll leave out the details, but I happen to have a lot of trouble in my past here. It's a little inconvenient to be acting as Rio."

"Inconvenient?"

"... Yeah. It was a mess. There was a time I was caught up in some trouble with a certain country, so using my real name would be bound to cause problems."

Rio was hiding as much as possible from her.

"I see... But you'll end up meeting someone who knows your face, won't you? Is that alright?"

"Actually, over the last few years I was travelling to the Yagumo region in the east. I expect nobody would notice me at a glance. In fact, no one has yet."

That said, there was a girl with pretty sharp intuition.

"That so... That's fine, I suppose. Then, may I ask why you wanted to tell me about yourself?"

Rio went over his story piece by piece.

The relationship between Amakawa Haruto and Ayase Miharuru.

His relationship with Tendou Aki.

How he confessed to Miharuru the night before based on all of that.

And Satsuki sat there listening intently.

"——Then, did you enter the same school to look for Miharuru? Does that mean you went to the same school as me?"

She asked in a way that said she didn't believe it, but Rio smiled wryly in response.

"Well, I didn't know we were going to the same school at the time, but I'm essentially your junior."

"Junior... You're my...?"

Satsuki fell silent for a moment while her brain tried to process the information.

Soon enough, though, she raised her head.

"... Wait a minute. That's strange, isn't it?"

"You mean the chronological order?"

On the contrary, Rio's voice was completely calm.

"Mm. You died when you were a college student, right? Then you reincarnated here. So, the you now is..."

"I'm sixteen years old. I regained my memories when I was seven."

"... What do you mean?"

"Even I don't fully understand it, but..."

Rio stopped abruptly.

"It's nothing. We should get back to the main topic, right?"

"Right... You said you confessed the love from your last life to Miharuchan."

"Yeah."

He consented with a mature smile.

"... Is this alright? Are you really okay with this?"

"Okay with what?"

"Them leaving, of course! You love Miharuchan, right? And Aki-chan should be your little sister, right?"

Satsuki asked those questions, barely suppressing the urge to shout at him, but Rio replied calmly as before.

"Yes. That's why I confessed. I thought it would be better to tell them everything."

"Are you telling me that you'll give up this easily? Do your feelings for her only weigh that much to you?"

"I'd be lying if I said I won't feel lonely, but I can't do anything besides cheering her on with the person she loves. It's the same for Aki-chan; I don't think she wants to meet someone she hates so much."

Rio answered, his smile strangely empty.

"The letter... Did you put it in your letter? The thing about your previous life."

"Yes."

"Then... Does their going to Saint Stella kingdom with Takahisa have something to do with them reading those letters?"

"Yeah, maybe."

"What did Miharu-chan and the kids tell you?"

"That they never want to see me again."

Satsuki's face contorted when Rio said it lightheartedly, and shouted at the top of her lungs.

"THAT'S A LIE!"

"A lie?"

"Yeah. Miharu-chan isn't the kind of girl who'd ever say something like that."

"You're pretty confident about this, aren't you?"

"You don't trust Miharu-chan?"

"I do trust her. I don't think Miharu-san reached that conclusion easily. Even I felt bad about doing it for my own sake."

"... Can you cut it with the empty words, Haruto-kun?"

"You're not the first person to tell me that."

Celia's face came to the front of Rio's mind.

"Let me ask you something: why didn't you hand over the letters when you confessed?"

"Everyone came out onto the balcony when I was about to."

"Ah, I see... So it was our fault then. Sorry."

"It's not like Satsuki-san did anything wrong. I told Masato not to worry about us, but I was surprised everyone came after us faster than expected."

"Right, Char-chan said she saw you two heading out to the balcony... and then Takahisa and Aki ran off after you."

"I see."

Rio visibly winced at recalling what happened.

"I get it now. Why you wanted to give them those letters as soon as possible. So you handed them off this morning?"

"Yeah. Since Miharu-san wasn't there, I entrusted them to Takahisa-san."

"That so... You know you didn't need to let yourself get dragged along by Char-chan, though."

"I kind of did. A fledgling noble can't refuse an invitation from royalty, you know? The gap in our standing is just too wide."

"That's true, but... Ugh, it sounds like a corporate slave having to go to business meetings..."

Maybe because she couldn't stomach something in his words, Satsuki pursed her lips in irritation.

There was a time when her father had broken promises he made to make a meeting with his clients.

It's not like she didn't understand his reasoning now that she'd grown up, but they weren't good memories.

"Wait a minute. If it's Haruto-kun, you wouldn't need to send the letters since you could sneak out in the middle of the night, right?"

"That's impossible, unfortunately. Your room is at the top of the spire—there's no terrace in the lower floors for me to leave or enter through. If I went through the corridors, I'd be noticed by the palace guards since security was strengthened. And even with that, my actions in the castle are monitored, too."

As for windows, those only existed in the lower floors for the sake of ventilation. They were too small for infiltration.

"Christ, then why don't you just say it to her directly?!"

"... Wait, why are you so angry over this, Satsuki-san?"

"Because I don't understand Miharu-chan's reaction! I get it, you don't want to bother her, but Miharu isn't the kind of girl that would just leave without saying anything! Wouldn't it be better to talk to her face to face?"

Satsuki spoke as if she was putting the blame on him.

And she was right. All of this would likely be cleared up if Rio just talked to them.

But Miharu aside, he worried if he'd lose the will to speak if Aki got emotional over it.

Even so, Satsuki knew it'd be better to say it to their faces.

"You're right. That's why I tried to say it when I confessed to Miharu-san..."

He sounded like he was mocking himself, eliciting a heaving sigh from his conversation partner.

"... And we interrupted you the moment you had the chance."

His plan was to confess, give Miharuru a brief explanation about his past life, then give her the letters.

But Takahisa and Aki barging onto the balcony cut him off in the middle. Satsuki knew it wasn't Rio's fault.

For a brief moment, the only sound in the room was their breathing, and eventually Satsuki muttered something.

"So... I haven't heard the most important thing yet."

"What could that be?"

"Why did you tell me about all this?"

"I wished for you to not mention anything about me the next time you meet them."

Satsuki was speechless for a minute.

"... What do you mean?"

"If the topic turns to me around Miharuru-san and the others, I want Satsuki-san to avoid mentioning me."

"Why?"

"I don't want to make them feel bad."

"That kind of...!"

She choked down the unpleasant words in her throat.

She nearly lost her breath looking at Rio's pathetic grin, and realized she was getting too heated.

Satsuki took a second to catch herself.

"... Hey, you should know that Miharuru-chan might love Takahisa-kun. Why did you tell her in spite of that?"

"I feel like it's better than saying nothing even if I already knew the outcome. That's the kind of regret Amakawa Haruto lived and died with."

"Then why didn't you confess to her right after you reunited with her in this world?"

"There's a lot of reasons for that, but it just comes down to me being scared. Having to confront whether I was really Amakawa Haruto. And if it was true, whether or not there was any part of him that remained in me as I am now."

"What are you talking about?"

"I have no objective evidence that I'm Amakawa Haruto reborn. Was I really the



kind of person my memories tell me I was? And how would I prove it?"

"That's..."

Satsuki couldn't answer right away. Rio was answering so matter-of-factly that it was hard to refute.

"In the end, though, that's all an excuse. To be honest, I was just a coward. Even if I really was Amakawa Haruto, the current me is a completely different person both physically and mentally. My morality and values now are vastly different from my previous life. I only decided to confess after I got the chance to talk with Satsuki-san."

"Then... Are you tell me you can accept how everything ended?"

"... Yeah."

Rio shrugged his shoulders in surrender.

"Really?"

"Even if I can't, there's nothing I can do about it."

"... Sorry. But personally, I'm not satisfied with this."

"Everyone has their own values. I think yours are fine just the way they are. But I want you to not question Miharuru-san or the kids about this. Please."

Rio bowed his head as he asked, but Satsuki ignored him and averted her eyes.

"And one other thing. Though, this is more like a proposal than a request."

"... What is it?"

"We should keep some distance between us from now on. We shouldn't meet like this anymore."

"W-w-wait, why?"

"Because Haruto Amakawa is officially a member of the Galwark kingdom nobility. Don't you think someone might try to use that against you if we get too close to each other?"

Satsuki gasped, more that Rio said it so plainly than at the suggestion itself.

"Such a thing..."

But she couldn't say it wouldn't happen.

Rio was the only person Satsuki had grown close to among the Galwark nobles.

She had been spending the last few months keeping everyone at a safe distance.

"I don't know what His Highness Francois is planning. So let's not look like we're too intimate, shall we?"

"A little... Give me a bit of time to think about it."

That was the best response she could give as Rio stood to leave.

"Alright. Though you should know I'm leaving the capital tomorrow."

"Wait!"

"What's wrong?"

"One more question."

"Okay."

Rio took his seat once more.

"You're trying to settle that matter of yours, right?"

"Settle...?"

"Your relationship with Miharu-chan and the kids. You're not trying to make it seem like nothing, right?"

His eyes opened wide at hearing that.

"... Yeah, you're right."

Though he answered, Satsuki didn't miss the pause beforehand.

"You're not giving up in despair and desperation either?"

"Not in the least."

So he answered again, more firmly this time.

"... Okay then. Thanks. Then I'll see you later."



And now Rio was being led by Satsuki to the castle's training area.

There were soldiers and knights training in the field, but several knights who looked like they had a high rank stopped to greet them.

Among them was Kyle, a knight and one of Rio's acquaintances.

"Good day, Satsuki-sama, Haruto-dono. We've been waiting for you."

"Sorry for such a sudden request. About the things I asked for—"

"Already prepared. Please wait a moment."

The knight responding followed along with Satsuki smoothly, the former a senior in his prime. Seemed like the two had matches before themselves.

"Oi!"

"Ha—"

When the senior knight called, Kyle and another young knight were already off running.

They returned immediately, each carrying a wooden spear-type weapon called a glaive that was around two meters long.

One knight gave his to Satsuki, the other to Rio, and Satsuki led him out onto the field.

She didn't give him an explanation, but with a training implement in hand he had a hunch.

"Let's have a match, Haruto-kun."

As soon as she made the suggestion, Satsuki gave Rio a daring grin, and readied her weapon.